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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Free to Deployed Areas

Afghans not equipped to manage aid, report finds

By **HEATH DRUZIN**
Stars and Stripes

KABUL — With an increasing amount of U.S. aid flowing directly to the Afghan government, two audits have shown that none of the country's ministries is set up to manage and account for the billions of American taxpayer dollars being sent their way.

In 2010, the U.S. Agency for International Development contracted with accounting firms Ernst &

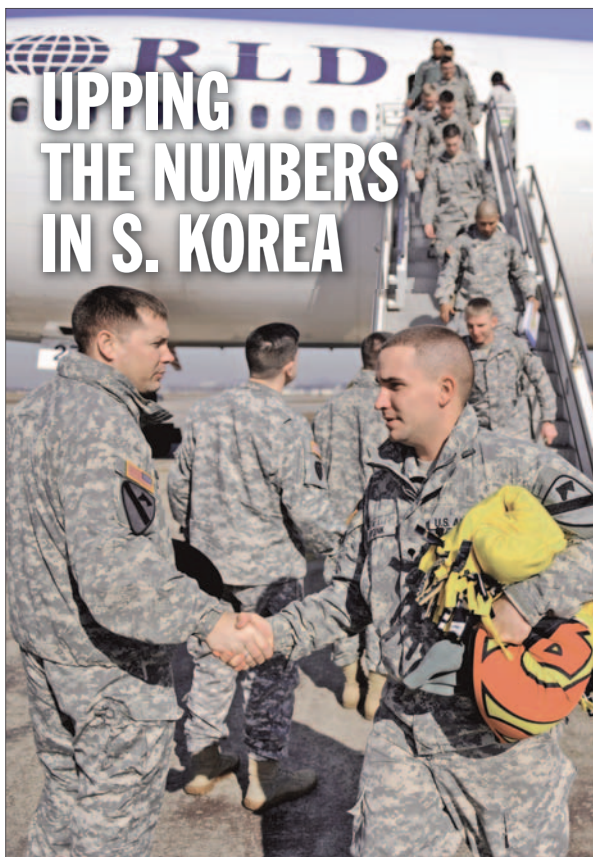
The firms made nearly 700 suggestions for changes in the way the ministries should account for aid money.

U.S. government watchdog in Afghanistan, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The firms made nearly 700 suggestions for changes in the way the ministries should account for aid money. A subsequent internal review of seven of the ministries by USAID found more than 100 "major risks" there, including "misappropriation of cash arising from payments of salaries in cash," SIGAR said in a separate audit of direct assistance to Afghanistan, which also was published Thursday.

"A SIGAR audit report published this quarter concluded that USAID has not fully implemented measures designed to fix significant problems within Afghan ministries that will receive over \$1 billion in direct, government-to-government assistance," John Sopko, special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, wrote in the quarterly report to Congress.

SEE REPORT ON PAGE 2



Cavalry battalion deploys for 9-month rotation | Page 7

Senior leaders of the 2nd Infantry Division greet members of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, as they arrive at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday.

SHUTA B. IKA/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

AF official outlines changes to ICBM force

By **JON HARPER**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Air Force Secretary Deborah James has outlined a series of changes she wants implemented to fix what she called a "systemic problem" in the nation's intercontinental ballistic missile force.

During a speech at an Air Force Association breakfast Wednesday in Arlington, Va., James laid out recommendations about how the Air Force could improve its nuclear enterprise, including changing the culture within the ICBM

force, modifying launch officer evaluation criteria, spending more money to improve quality of life for missileers, and punishing those who don't live up to the service's ethical standards.

James came up with those recommendations following discussions with airmen during her recent visit to all three of the Air Force's ICBM bases. James made the trip in the wake of revelations this month that missile launch officers cheated on monthly proficiency exams and others were implicated in an illegal-narcotics investigation.

At each location, James was briefed by wing commanders and participated in town halls with servicemembers, but she also conducted small focus groups with launch officers and enlisted personnel from which senior officers were excluded.

Based on what she heard during those meetings, she said the command climate within the missile wings needs to change.

SEE ICBM ON PAGE 5

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"For the size of a traveler's shampoo bottle, you can serve an entire urban high school and get them stoned."

— Rachel O'Bryan, a lawyer with Smart Colorado, which opposed the legalization of marijuana, on concerns about the increased ease with which airline passengers can travel with the drug

See story on Page 12

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5. Air Force secretary proposes changes to missile force

COMING SOON

Entertainment

Aaron Eckhart takes on role of Frankenstein



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MIDEAST

Afghan official optimistic Karzai will sign US pact

By KAY JOHNSON
The Associated Press

KABUL — President Hamid Karzai's national security adviser expressed optimism Thursday that the Afghan leader will sign a key U.S. security pact before leaving office this year, a positive sign after weeks of deadlock and anti-American rhetoric from the government.

Rangin Dadfar Spanta said there have been recent talks with the U.S. to try to resolve the issue.

"We are working very intensively together with the United States authorities to reach and sign this agreement soon," Spanta said. "I cannot go today into detail, but I don't know — since two, three, four days, I am more optimistic compared to last week. Let us wait a few days more."

Washington has been frustrated

by Karzai's refusal to sign the pact that would allow some U.S. troops to remain and keep training Afghan soldiers after the planned withdrawal of most troops by the end of this year. Without the agreement, American military trainers will be forced to pull out of Afghanistan, weakening the government's ability to fight the Taliban insurgency.

Also on Thursday, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel warned that at some point Karzai's indecision will interfere with Washington's need to plan the post-2014 military mission that the Afghan president, has said he favors.

"You can't just keep deferring and deferring, because at some point, the realities of planning and budgeting — it collides," Hagel told reporters flying with him to Poland.

However, Hagel said he respects Karzai's right to decide



MASSOUD HOSSAIN/AP

Afghan National Security Adviser Rangin Dadfar Spanta speaks at a news conference Thursday at the presidential palace in Kabul.

the matter as he sees fit, and noted that the United States' ability to influence Karzai's decision-making is "limited."

Along with elections to be held in April, the Bilateral Security Agreement is a pillar of the U.S.-led coalition's plan to end its 12-year mission in Afghanistan and to hand over full security authority to the Afghan government at the end of 2014.

Karzai repeatedly has declined to sign the document, saying he wants to wait to sign it after the country elects his successor in the April 5 presidential election.

If the deal falls apart, Afghanistan could lose up to \$15 billion per

year in aid, effectively collapsing its fragile economy and making it unable to pay its 350,000-strong army and police.

Insurgents in Afghanistan have intensified attacks recently in a campaign to regain territory as foreign forces prepare to leave the country at the end of 2014.

A suicide car bomber killed two police officers in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday, officials said. The car bomber targeted a police and intelligence compound in Nangarhar province's Pachir Wagan district, provincial spokesman Ahmad Zia Abdulzai said. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

Report: Agency official says SIGAR report could harm ties

FROM FRONT PAGE

The quarterly report said that USAID ignored its own requirements by continuing to provide direct assistance to the ministries and that it ignored recommendations to suspend direct assistance until the ministries implemented improved systems to ensure the money was used as intended.

Corruption remains rife in the Afghan government. Last year, Afghanistan was ranked at the bottom of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index for the second year in a row, a major concern for international donors.

In a letter responding to the report, Donald Sampler, assistant to the USAID administrator for Afghanistan and Pakistan, questioned the release of what he

termed "sensitive" information.

His letter concurred with SIGAR's recommendations — which include developing a plan for risk assessment and mitigation and informing Congress of the results of ministry assessments — but said they already are being implemented.

"SIGAR's audit did not identify waste, fraud or abuse in USAID's direct assistance program," Sampler wrote. "While the audit report examines and calls attention to the risks USAID identified in the Ministries that could potentially impact direct assistance programming in Afghanistan, it fails to acknowledge the full range of risk mitigation measures USAID subsequently employed."

Sampler wrote that the Afghan government provided "unpre-

cedented access" to auditors with the understanding that the reports would not be made public. USAID asked that SIGAR "not make public sensitive information that could damage our bilateral relationships with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," Sampler wrote.

"Unfortunately, public release of these materials will likely result in reduced cooperation from the Afghan Government and could undermine our ability to conduct proper oversight of direct assistance programs in the future," he wrote.

A spokesman for Afghan President Hamid Karzai did not respond to requests for comment on the report.

Though the United States is rapidly withdrawing its military

contingent from Afghanistan ahead of the Dec. 31 deadline for the departure of all foreign combat troops, it plans to continue spending billions of dollars to fund reconstruction efforts for years to come, and there are grave concerns about the proper spending of that money. The Afghan government is almost entirely dependent on foreign aid to fund its budget.

The U.S. has spent roughly \$100 billion on reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. There have been tangible improvements in education, health care, and infrastructure, but the massive program has been heavily criticized for lack of oversight and poor planning.

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MILITARY

System to police colleges on GI Bill benefits

By LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Federal officials on Thursday launched an online complaints system designed to root out colleges that take advantage of student veterans and their military education benefits.

Complaints will be reviewed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission.

The massive interagency effort will allow federal officials to use their findings to pressure schools into changing, or to go after harsher punishment if warranted.

Veterans' groups hailed the move as a game-changer.

"This is going to give us the

ability to identify problems and trends veterans are having, and name names," said Ryan Gallucci, deputy legislative director for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Lawmakers in recent years have expressed concerns about veterans' wasting GI Bill benefits at schools that provide shaky degree programs and few job prospects. The VA has distributed more than \$34 billion in post-9/11 GI Bill funds since that benefit began in fall 2009, making it attractive to unscrupulous schools.

Democrats on the Senate education committees have focused on for-profit schools, blasting them as targeting military and veteran students while providing poor postgraduation prospects.

"Prior to today, veterans and servicemembers had nowhere to go when they were subjected to aggressive and deceptive re-

cruting by predatory, for-profit colleges, including being lied to about a school's accreditation, true tuition and fees," said Carrie Wofford, president of Veterans Education Success.

Veterans' groups such as the VFW and Student Veterans of America in recent months have declined to attack the for-profit higher education industry, saying that anecdotes of student problems aren't limited to any one set of schools.

Outside groups, including the American Legion, have launched their own complaints centers and assistance hotlines to better track some of those problems. Advocates are optimistic the new federal system will not only help better identify bad actors, but also force changes in their practices.

The move comes some 18 months after President Barack

Obama signed an executive order designed to promote "principles of excellence" for higher-education institutions receiving federal funds. VA officials said Thursday that collecting and investigating student complaints is part of a range of tools designed to make sure GI Bill funds are being spent wisely.

"The online complaint system empowers veterans and their dependents and provides them a direct line to VA and our partner agencies," VA Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey said in a statement. "The feedback we receive from veterans, service members and their families will help us strengthen enforcement ... to ensure students are receiving the education benefits they have earned and deserve."

Complaints are expected to range from student-life problems

—like course offerings and counseling availability — to possible criminal actions, including predatory loan programs and academic credentialing fraud.

The complaints system also covers problems with active-duty students who use Defense Department tuition-assistance programs. In a statement, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright said the program "will ensure we have the right information to identify and address any negative practices."

The complaints system is available online through the VA website at www.benefits.va.gov/gi-bill/feedback.asp and through the Defense Department at www.militaryonesource.mil/voluntaryeducation/content?id=274604.

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Pentagon will review higher pensions for top officers

By TOM VANDEN BROOK
USA Today

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon commission on military compensation will review a 2007 increase in pensions for three- and four-star officers that made the retirement pay of some officers higher than what they made on active duty, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told a Senate panel Tuesday.

Navy Adm. James Winnefeld said the commission will examine the change as it examines all compensation issues.

The pension change, largely unremarked on at the time, was first reported on by USA Today in 2012 and again this year in light of the cost-of-living cuts.

The Pentagon had requested the change in law for top brass in 2003 to help retain senior officers as the military was fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and wanted to keep experienced officers on active duty.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., cited USA Today's report Tuesday when she asked Winnefeld whether the changes to pensions for top brass, which boosted their pensions as much as 63 percent, should be reviewed.

A four-star general or admiral retiring with 40 years of experience would receive a pension of \$237,144, according to the Pentagon. Base pay for active-duty top officers is \$181,501, according to the Pentagon. Housing and other allowances can increase their compensation an additional third.

Winnefeld testified as part of a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing into a reduction in cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees younger than 62. The change, which was included in a budget deal struck late last year, would see pensions for veterans younger than 62 decrease 1 percent annually beginning in 2015. The COLA reduction was eliminated for disabled veterans.



MICHAEL S. DARNELL/Stars and Stripes

Airborne soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment dropped an M119 howitzer and a Humvee from 1,300 feet in the air onto a U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria landing zone as part of a training exercise Wednesday.

'Heavy drop' has light landing for howitzer, Humvee

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — Soldiers from the 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment sent a 4,000-pound machine hurtling toward the ground from 1,300 feet in the air.

The M119 howitzer landed seconds later, a small puff of powered snow the only evidence of its rapid descent.

The airborne soldiers were conducting a "heavy drop" exercise, in which they practice dropping large equipment — like the howitzer and the Humvee they used for this mission — at a remote location. After the equipment is safely settled, paratroopers from following aircraft land, secure it

and get it ready for combat.

The Humvee takes a matter of minutes and the howitzer can be ready to fire in approximately 20 minutes, said 1st Lt. Benjamin Hurley, an aerial delivery officer with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

"After the heavy drops land, they'll go to the howitzer and begin de-rigging it. It's really quick," he said, referring to unhooking the parachute.

It takes many seasoned hands to safely drop complex machinery from about 1,000 feet in the air and have it ready to go so quickly. Roughly 150 paratroopers landed during the exercise, many of them with dozens of jumps to their credit.

With this type of training mission, there

is often a soldier still learning the ropes.

Air Force Capt. Pete Dowling, an air liaison officer with the 2nd Air Support Operations Squadron in Vilsack, made his first jump during the exercise. The nerves one might think accompany a first-time leap from a plane are mostly myth, he said.

"In all honesty, I just wanted to get it over with," Dowling said. "My brother is in Afghanistan right now and he's got 13, 14 jumps under his belt. I'm just trying to catch up to him."

"It was a good, smooth exit. I was able to float on down to earth and prepare for a good landing ... I'm up and walking again. Can't complain."

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MILITARY

Defense analyst calls for US to expand Africa force

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany—The U.S. should send a 5,000-strong security assistance brigade to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help stabilize a country ravaged by more than a decade of war, a prominent U.S. military analyst recommends.

In a "memorandum" to President Barack Obama, Michael O'Hanlon, of the Brookings Institution, also urged the White House to send several hundred military advisers to Libya to help train that country's fledgling armed forces.

"The United States should, with a focused effort and in partnership with other states, make a significant push to improve security in Africa," O'Hanlon wrote in his Jan. 23 memo, which was posted on the Brookings website. "No massive deployments of U.S. troops would be needed, and in fact no role for American main combat units is required. But we should step up our game from the current very modest training efforts coordinated through Africa Command."

The recommendation comes at a time of increased concern about

instability in certain parts of Africa. The list of hot spots is long: Mali, Somalia and across ungoverned spaces in the Sahel region of western and north-central Africa, where extremists have taken root, armed in large part with weapons looted from Libyan armories during NATO's air assault on Moammar Gadhafi's regime in 2011.

In addition, ethnic divisions have exploded into bloody violence in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the DRC.

AFRICOM has engaged in many of those hot spots, though U.S. military action generally takes the form of modestly sized training missions, intelligence-gathering operations and logistical support to French forces on the ground in places like Mali.

It seems unlikely that the Obama administration would follow O'Hanlon's recommendation.

In the State of the Union speech Tuesday, Obama emphasized that as the war in Afghanistan winds down, he would send U.S. forces into conflict zones only as a last resort.

"I will not send our troops into harm's way unless it's truly necessary. Nor will I allow our sons and daughters to be mired in open-

ended conflicts," Obama said.

In the case of lawless eastern Congo, where thousands of people have been killed in the past decade despite the presence of U.N. peacekeepers, there are no clear national security risks at stake for the U.S. While the U.S. has provided some military training to support DRC troops in the past, sending a 5,000-strong brigade would be an unprecedented move in the region.

Asked about O'Hanlon's recommendation, Maj. Fred Harrell, an AFRICOM spokesman, said it would be "inappropriate" for the command to comment on any potential policy decision.

Thierry Vircoulon, the International Crisis Group's director for Central Africa, was skeptical that the U.S. military is capable of helping to bring stability to the Congo.

"I believe that, unfortunately, the problems of Congo are not the type of problems that can be addressed by the U.S. Army," Vircoulon said.

The DRC's problem, Vircoulon said, is "bad governance, bad governance, bad governance."

O'Hanlon also recommended that the U.S. send several hundred



JOHN VANDIVER/Stars and Stripes

In 2011, the U.S. military trained a battalion of roughly 700 Congolese troops as part of an effort to professionalize a force that has a reputation for lawlessness. U.S. efforts in Congo have been limited mainly to training.

troops to Libya to train that country's military. Since Gadhafi's fall, Libya has been in a state of virtual anarchy. The U.S. and Europe are drawing up plans to train government forces, but that will likely occur outside of the country.

O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, acknowledges that increasing the U.S. military's profile in Africa could be a hard sell.

"At a time of national war fatigue and fiscal austerity, it may

be counterintuitive to propose increasing American involvement, particularly if it involves military commitment abroad. But for a modest investment, the United States and other countries may be able to make major strides towards improving the prospects for peace and stability on the continent."

O'Hanlon's full memorandum can be read at tinyurl.com/lorcr3p.

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Italy's new taxes, duties on US military mail cause dispute

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy—Italian customs agents in Rome have begun charging taxes and duties on packages entering the U.S. military mail system in the country, prompting a dispute over one aspect of basing agreements between the two countries.

The customs agents announced the change via a letter given to military mail officials at the Rome airport, said Chief Petty Officer Travis Simmons, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy base in Naples. The agents are holding two dozen packages bound for bases in Naples and Sigonella, Sicily, until the dispute is resolved, he said.

Italians have argued they are allowed to levy the new fees, while U.S. officials say long-standing basing agreements between the countries prohibit the tax levies, Simmons said. Those include the 1951 NATO Status of Forces agreement covering the American presence in the country as well as various agreements for each base.

"It's just two different interpretations," he said.

Navy representatives have met twice with customs agents and U.S. Embassy officials in Rome and will continue to try to resolve the issue, he said.

The base warned personnel earlier this week that shipped merchandise worth more than 22 euros, or about \$30, would be sub-

A variety of items now subject to Italian fees

The merchandise shipped via the U.S. Military Postal System that may be subjected to a value-added tax and customs duties includes:

- Roasted ground coffee and surrogates.
- Master keys and utensils for combination locks.
- Plants and soil.
- Lottery tickets of any kind.
- Slot machines or parts thereof.
- Albums of any kind (for photographs, postcards, stamps, etc.).
- Artificial fruit and flowers and accessories for the same.

series for the same.

- Bells and other musical instruments and parts thereof.
- Capsules and cartridges.
- Clocks and watch supplies.
- Coins, bank notes and paper values.
- Corals mounded of any kind.
- Ether and chloroform.
- Photographic and cinematographic films exposed.
- Footwear of all kinds.
- Apparel and sewn clothing of every kind.
- Hair and hair products.

- Leather goods.
- Nutmeg, vanilla, sea salt, mineral salt and saffron.
- Playing cards of any type.
- Postage stamps in letters open or closed.
- Typewriter ribbons.
- Saccharine.
- Salted meat, smoked, or otherwise prepared.
- Toys which are not exclusively made of wood.
- Skins and furs, tressed.

Source: U.S. Navy

ject to Italy's value-added tax and customs duties.

A flier distributed by the base included a list of items that could trigger the fees, ranging from common retail goods ("apparel and sewn clothing of every kind") to chemicals already banned from the mail system ("ether and chloroform") to such oddball articles as "typewriter ribbon" and "bells and other musical instruments and parts thereof."

Other military bases in Italy have not been affected by the new rules, Army and Air Force representatives said.

Most mail for bases in Vicenza and Aviano enters through Milan, they said, whereas all Navy packages arrive through the Fiumicino Airport just west of Rome.

Italy's value-added tax varies between 10 percent and 22 percent for most products, with a few items taxed at 4 percent. Food, water and other living necessities draw the lowest rates, while con-

sumer products like apparel and electronics are taxed at the highest rates.

The military mail system allows those based overseas to receive U.S. Postal Service and commer-

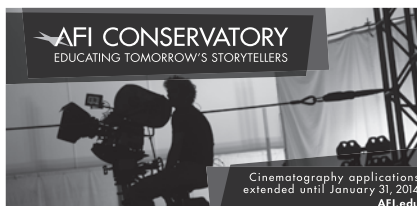
cial parcels from the U.S. at rates comparable to domestic shipping. Online shopping has become more common in recent years, and many large online retailers like Amazon.com recognize military addresses in their order forms.

Frustration over the new rule quickly appeared on Facebook pages after the announcement.

"So ... basically you can't order anything or receive gifts from friends via the mail," Charlie Stevens wrote on the base page. "That's wrong!!!!"

Host nation tax issues occasionally crop up at other overseas military bases. The town of Rota, Spain, which hosts a U.S. Navy base inside a Spanish navy base, has long sought to tax buildings within the base as it does those outside, but its efforts have been blocked by Spanish courts.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jason Duhr contacted the U.S. Postal Service. beardsley.steven@stripes.com



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MILITARY

ICBM: Incentive pay, testing changes mulled for scandal-riven missile force

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The need for perfection has created way too much stress and way too much fear about the future," James said. "I heard repeatedly, especially in the focus groups, that the system feels very punitive. It doesn't feel that you're incentivized for good but rather you're punished merely if anything bad should happen."

"I've also heard repeatedly that there's a level of micromanagement within this force."

She said more money needs to be spent on personnel who man the ICBM force because servicemembers at the missile wings view Defense Department leaders as officials who merely pay lip service to them.

"I also heard repeatedly that the airmen hear that the mission is important but we don't necessarily put our money or our attention where our mouth is [and] there's a difference between what we say and what they feel that we do," James said. "We need to put our money where our mouth is."

"So this is everything from perhaps we should have additional funding for manning levels to get them up, perhaps [for] military construction. I saw some leaking roofs; things of this nature. There might be some quality-of-life things [where we can] redirect some of our investments for this force."

"We need to examine the incentives, the accolades, the recognition that is available to the nuclear force," she said. "This gets into the realm of should we consider some sort of incentive pay or, you know, scholarships for certain types of work [or] should we [award] a medal or a ribbon. So we need to look at all of that."

James said the performance grading and promotion system for launch officers is flawed and needs to be more comprehensive.

"In the current environment, there's no room for error — no room for error all of the time," she said. "And yet when you're talking about training, the idea of training is learning and mistakes happen and you get better. That's what training is all about."

"But in this environment it sounded to me like everything was a test and that perfect test scores had become an important gauge — in some cases I heard the only gauge — allowing commanders to differentiate [among the launch officers]," she said. "This is wrong. We need to address this."

"And I think rather than making a 110 percent test be the make-it-or-break-it for these young people and the future of their careers, I think we need to look at a whole person concept [and] the totality of what they're doing with a test being an element [but] not a make-it-or-break-it element all the time."

Being a good wingman does not mean protecting others who lack integrity.

Deborah James
Air Force secretary

James suggested that commanders need to be punished for the cheating scandal.

"We clearly have to have accountability at all levels," she said. "For those involved — some of whom actually cheated, some of whom knew about it but didn't stop it — there needs to be accountability, and there will be. But we're also looking at the leadership."

"Part of what's going on now is we're doing this commander investigation," Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson, the commander of Global Strike Command, said Thursday. "So [the Office of Special Investigations] will turn over their information to the team. ... At the end of that, we'll make recommendations on all personnel actions. We're looking at everything from squadron, group, wing and numbered Air Force levels."

James wants the Air Force to encourage missileers to inform on their peers anonymously so they won't be seen as ratting out their comrades who cheat.

"Airmen need to understand that being a good wingman does

not mean protecting others who lack integrity," she said. "And of course airmen have a responsibility not only to act with integrity in their own actions, but also to report wrongdoing that they see going on. And somehow that got a bit lost here."

"So we need to ... remind people that there are ways to report things both directly and through anonymous sources. I heard over and over again airmen don't want to be perceived as reporting on their buddies."

On Thursday, James told reporters at the Pentagon that the number of officers implicated in the cheating scandal has increased to 92, all of whom are stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. All 92 have been temporarily de-certified and can no longer stand watch. She said the investigation is nearing completion.

James also said the number of servicemembers within the nuclear enterprise implicated in the drug probe has increased to 13.

Spurred by the recent scandals and poor performance and con-

duct among elements of the missile force, last week Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel ordered a 60-day review of the nuclear enterprise. Air Force leaders are expected to develop an action plan by the time the review is completed.

James will be a key player in the review, and she told reporters the focus areas she outlined will be examined during the effort.

James met with Hagel and other leaders of the nuclear enterprise at the Pentagon on Wednesday and shared her views, Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters.

"I think there was a general recognition that, yes, there are systemic issues and, yes, we need to start trying to solve them," Kirby said.

Kirby said corrective measures will be enacted "in the coming weeks and months," but it's too early to tell what the action plan will include or when specific initiatives will take effect.

"The work has just begun ... and I would be loath right now to characterize what it's going to look like," Kirby said. "I suspect it certainly will have a list of tasks that they believe need to be accomplished or checked or maintained, and then some recommendations moving forward."

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PACIFIC

Congress to DOD: Probe tsunami-response ailments

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Congress has instructed the Defense Department to launch an inquiry into potential health impacts on Navy first responders from Japan's March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster.

The request, made in the explanatory statement from the House that accompanied the fiscal 2014 budget bill that passed Congress last week, comes as a growing number of sailors and Marines have joined a lawsuit against Tokyo Electric Power Co.

While the instruction is not law, Defense Department officials said they were taking the request seriously. "The Department treats reporting requirements included in committee reports seriously and tries to respond to all of them," Defense Department spokesman Army Lt. Col. Catherine Wilkinson wrote in a statement to Stars and Stripes last week.

The statement gives Assistant Secretary Dr. Jonathan Woodson until April 15 to submit a report to the congressional defense committees that includes the number of sailors serving on the USS Ronald Reagan during Operation Tomodachi who were potentially exposed to increased levels of radiation; adverse medical conditions experienced by Reagan sailors since the operation; and actions taken before, during and after the operation to ensure sailors' safety.

Woodson also must include the number of sailors who participated in the operation who are still in the Navy, reservists who participated and sailors who have since separated.

About 50 sick sailors and Marines have accused TEPCO of lying about the risk of exposure, luring American forces closer to the affected areas and lulling others at bases across Japan into disregarding safety measures. Those individuals claim to be suffering from exposure-related ailments such as unexplained cancers, excessive bleeding, thyroid issues and ailments including loss of muscle power, migraines and vision problems.

The suit was filed in federal court in San Diego in December 2012 seeking damages and funds to cover medical expenses. The original eight complainants were on the USS Ronald Reagan, but the suit has since expanded to include those who served aboard the USS Essex and the USS Germantown as well as attached Marines.

The explanatory statement does not request an inquiry into the health and safety of Marines who participated in the operation.

"Recent reports of sailors who have developed cancer and other health conditions linked to radiation exposure after serving on

Hundreds sue makers of Fukushima nuclear plant

TOKYO — About 1,400 people filed a joint lawsuit Thursday against three companies that manufactured reactors at Japan's Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant, saying they should be financially liable for damage caused by their 2011 meltdowns.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs said the lawsuit, filed at Tokyo District Court, is a landmark challenge of current regulations that give manufacturers immunity from liability in nuclear accidents. Under Japan's nuclear damage compensation policy, only the operator of the plant, Tokyo Electric Power

Co., has been held responsible for the accident, which was triggered by a powerful earthquake and tsunami.

The 1,415 plaintiffs, including 38 Fukushima residents and 357 people from outside Japan, said the manufacturers — Toshiba, GE and Hitachi — failed to make needed safety improvements to the 4-decade-old reactors at the Fukushima plant.

They are seeking compensation of 100 yen (\$1) each, saying their main goal is to raise awareness of the problem.

— The Associated Press

the USS Ronald Reagan during Operation Tomodachi, which provided humanitarian assistance following the earthquake and subsequent tsunami in Japan in March 2011, are disconcerting," the statement said.

The statement directs Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus to use allocated funds — for example, \$200 million for its peer-reviewed medical research program, \$100 million for its joint warfighter medical research program or \$25 million for its peer-reviewed cancer research program — to research the health effects of radiation exposure and to ensure any health issues from the mission are fully addressed.

Mabus also is directed to report to the congressional defense committees on exposure-related research efforts.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs praised Congress for looking into the issue.

"It feels like maybe there's light at the end of the tunnel," Paul Garner, lawyer for the plaintiffs, said last week. "But we shall see." Garner said they plan to file an amended complaint Feb. 6 to address issues raised by a federal judge in the case late last year. He expects between 25 and 100 sailors and Marines to be added to the case, and that number could climb even after the amendment is filed.

"Their future is a dire one," Garner said. "We're pushing TEPCO to start a fund to help these people right now."

Congress isn't alone in taking notice. An online petition to "Help Irradiated Fukushima 'First Responders' from USS Ronald Reagan etc" was launched earlier this month on the community petition site AVAAZ.org. The petition has 238 signatures from people as far away as Canada and Grenada.

"Scores of brave US sailors were seriously contaminated and

made sick by Fukushima radiation while helping to save Japanese citizens during the 3/11/11 earthquake/tsunami," the petition reads. "But they were not told about massive radiation doses they suffered from the Fukushima melt-downs & explosions. Many are seriously ill and are suing Tokyo Electric Power.



EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

U.S. Navy crewmembers mop up the flight deck to remove radioactive contamination from the aircraft carrier the USS Ronald Reagan off the coast of Japan in March 2011.

THEY NEED OUR HELP!"

When the disaster struck on March 11, 2011, the Reagan was on its way to Korea, according to Reagan sailors who participated in Operation Tomodachi. They turned around and immediately made their way for the Japanese mainland, passing through a sea of debris.

Sailors told Stars and Stripes that they believe they were as close as 5 miles off the coast of the stricken plant that spewed radiation into the air and the sea.

Sailors who were aboard the Reagan have claimed they were drinking contaminated desalinated seawater and were bathing in it until the ship's leadership told them via the public address system to stop because it was contaminated. They claim the ventilation system also was contaminated.

Furthermore, some claim they were pressured into signing forms confirming they had been given iodine pills when none had

been provided.

The Defense Department and other organizations have said the radiation levels that troops were exposed to during Operation Tomodachi were safe. The Navy has acknowledged that the Reagan passed through a plume of radiation but said it was not harmful.

They have declined to comment on many of the other facets of the plaintiffs' case.

The scientific community is divided on the effects of low-level radiation.

Garner believes the number of sick servicemembers and the nature of their ailments speaks for itself. They are seeking at least \$40 million each in compensatory and punitive damages and more than \$1 billion for a fund to cover health monitoring and medical expenses.

"This is not going to disappear," he said.

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A salute to those who serve

PACIFIC

1-12 CAV deploys to South Korea

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — A U.S.-based cavalry battalion, complete with tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, has arrived in South Korea for a nine-month rotational deployment.

In a nod to the sensitivities on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone to changes in the U.S. force posture, officials are calling the additions only for defense and have been hesitant to discuss how the deployment affects American troop strength in South Korea.

A 2nd Infantry Division statement described the deployment as a "strictly defensive" movement that will increase readiness and strengthen U.S. and South Korean capabilities.

"The addition of a Combined Arms Battalion makes 2ID a more agile and lethal force more capable of deterring aggression and defending the Republic of Korea if called upon," it said.

The battalion, commanded by a lieutenant colonel, includes a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, two companies of mechanized infantry, two companies of armor and a forward support company.

The approximately 800 members of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, Texas, arrived Wednesday at Osan Air Base before traveling to Camps Hovey and Stanley, both north of Seoul. The unit brings with it about 40 M1A2 Abrams tanks and 40 M2A3 Bradleys, which will remain in Korea for follow-on rotations.

Earlier this month, Pentagon spokesman Col. Steven Warren described the rotational deployment as a long-planned "plus-up" that is part of the U.S. military and



SHUTA B. IKA/Courtesy of US Air Force

Senior leaders of the 2nd Infantry Division greet members of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, as they exit the aircraft at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday.

diplomatic rebalance to Asia.

"This gives the commanders in Korea an additional capability — two companies of tanks, two companies of Bradleys," he said.

The U.S. military's use of rotational forces in South Korea appears to be increasing.

Last September, it announced plans for a nine-month deployment of the 4th Battalion, 6th Cavalry Regiment from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., to Camp Humphreys. The air reconnaissance squadron includes about 380 soldiers and 30 OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters.

Adm. Samuel Locklear, head of the U.S. Pacific Command, told a Washington news conference last week that the decision to send a rotational armored unit was prompted by concerns over how to best maintain capabilities on the peninsula, not by changes in the

tactical or strategic environment.

"So it got played out like it was a big strategic move, but in reality, it was just part of the pre-planned decision we had made in the alliance to make sure we had the most capable forces on the peninsula and the way that — reflective of the way we rotate — we're increasingly rotating and using forces in this country," he said.

The U.S. military has maintained a force level of 28,500 in South Korea since 2008, when it halted a long-term drawdown to 25,000 troops at Seoul's request.

However, the arrival of the 1-12 CAV — the first troop movement

of 2014, according to 2ID — and the increasing frequency of rotational deployments could point to more boots on the ground.

Because the deployment is considered a temporary duty assignment and not a change of duty station, its personnel are not counted toward U.S. Forces Korea's overall force strength, according to the Eighth Army officials in South Korea.

USFK refused to comment this week on whether the use of rotational forces would affect current or future troop levels, saying only that South Korean officials are informed of the strength of units deploying to the country, including rotational units.

In a country where the presence of U.S. troops remains a sensitive topic and officials take pains to portray routine military exercises as nonthreatening to the North, South Korean officials have also been reluctant to address the U.S. troop levels.

A Ministry of National Defense spokesman said U.S. troop levels will remain at roughly 28,500 but could fluctuate slightly. Another ministry spokesman said there would be a temporary increase in troop numbers but refused to provide details.

Both said the rotational deployment was unrelated to concerns about the North Korean military threat.

Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story.
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More suspect barrels found near air base

By CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

OKINAWA CITY, Okinawa — An additional 13 corroded barrels were found beneath a soccer field adjacent to Kadena Air Base's primary and intermediate schools, the Japan Ministry of Defense said Thursday.

More than 20 dioxin- and herbicide-tainted drums were previously unearthed in another section of the field, shocking parents whose children attend the schools.

The latest discovery brings the total number of barrels found in the field to 47, a spokesman for the ministry's Okinawa Defense Bureau said. The latest barrels were rusted, crushed and marked with unreadable English, he said.

The ministry plans to dig in three more spots on the field where earlier magnetic surveys detected buried metals.

The soccer field land, southeast of present day Kadena Air Base, was used by the Air Force until 1986, when it was returned to Okinawa control. The 22 empty Dow Chemical Co. barrels already recovered were found to contain traces of dioxin, a common pollutant linked to cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, immune system damage and hormone imbalances.

Testing has concluded the hazardous materials from the drums has not spread to the soil in the soccer field or water in the area.

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MILITARY

Pentagon: Tests find cracks in F-35

By TONY CAPACCI

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 jet developed cracks in testing of the fighter's durability and wasn't sufficiently reliable in training flights last year, the Pentagon's chief tester found.

On-ground testing of the Air Force and Marine Corps versions of the fighter revealed "significant findings" of cracks on five occasions in fuselage bulkheads, flanges, stiffeners and engine mounts "that will require mitigation plans and may include redesigning parts and additional weight," according to an annual report on major weapons by Michael Gilmore, director of operational testing.

Gilmore repeatedly has raised questions about progress of the \$391.2 billion F-35 program, the most expensive U.S. weapons system. This year's report, released Tuesday, may draw particular scrutiny because the Pentagon will propose increasing purchases to 42 planes in fiscal 2015 from the 29 Congress authorized this year.

Lockheed, the top U.S. contractor, drew 16 percent of sales from the F-35 last year. "That number will grow in 2014," Bruce Tanner, chief financial officer for the Bethesda, Md.-based company told reporters last week.

In a full-page discussion of durability testing and cracking, Gilmore disclosed an incident in late September when a bulkhead "severed." He said "analy-

sis and corrective actions" were continuing.

Aircraft based in Florida, Arizona, California and Nevada for pilot-training missions continue "to be immature" and rely "heavily on contractor support and workarounds unacceptable in combat operations," Gilmore wrote.

Reliability measures "are all below" target goals for the current stage of development, he said.

The aircraft's weight stabilized last year, with little margin for growth without exceeding contractually binding limits that would jeopardize meeting combat requirements, Gilmore said.

The Air Force model, which will be the most numerous of the 2,443 F-35s planned, was within

341 pounds of its 29,030-pound airframe weight requirement as of October. The Marine Corps version was within 202 pounds of its 32,577-pound goal with several years of development left.

"Managing weight growth with such small margins will continue to be a significant program challenge," Gilmore said.

The test report also outlined achievements, finding that flight tests performed by 18 jets to evaluate the aircraft's flying prowess and handling qualities "made the planned progress" and "nearly matched or exceeded" sortie goals through October.

Flights designed to evaluate the aircraft's combat systems and integration of weapons "made little progress and continued to fall behind" its goals, Gilmore said.

German business club offering scholarships

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The Kaiserslautern chapter of the American-German Business Club is accepting applications for its annual scholarship.

The 1,000-euro scholarship (about \$1,400) is open to Americans and Germans who are studying business or plan to do so.

To qualify, an applicant must study business or business-related courses at the Technical University of Kaiserslautern or study business-related courses at an accredited university while having residence in the Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, Saarbrücken, Koblenz or Mainz areas.

Applicants must be at least a year away from finishing their degrees or be high school seniors who have been accepted to colleges or universities.

To qualify, a student must submit a cover letter and a 500- to 750-word essay in English explaining how they would use their business studies to further German-American relations. Cover letters should be no more than one page. They should include the applicant's name, current and home addresses, email address, telephone numbers, name of current school, expected year of college graduation, and an outline of the current course of study and any pertinent cross-cultural experiences.

Both the cover letter and essay must be saved as Microsoft Word documents and sent via email to: ScholarshipAGBKaiserslautern@hotmail.com. The deadline is March 30.

\$9M accord reached over boy's brain injury

HONOLULU — Attorneys for a Virginia boy with cerebral palsy say his family and the Honolulu military hospital where he was born have reached a tentative \$9 million settlement.

The amount, put on the record in federal court in Honolulu on Monday, is subject to final approval by the U.S. Department of Justice, said Loretta Sheehan, one of the family's attorneys.

According to the family's lawsuit, Noah Whitney was born in 2010 at Tripler Army Medical Center with "catastrophic brain injury" because of medical negligence.

Allegations in the lawsuit include failing to respond appropriately to signs and symptoms of uterine rupture and taking too long to perform a cesarean section. Laura Whitney arrived at the hospital on Sept. 7, 2010 with severe lower abdominal pain at about 35 weeks of pregnancy. The pregnancy was closely monitored because of previous miscarriages and the complicated birth of her first child, Evan.

The lawsuit blamed the hospital for Noah's severe brain injury and said he "will require 24 hour per day care for the remainder of his life."

From staff and wire reports

Employment effort meets 100,000-vet hiring goal

By GREGG ZOROVA

USA Today

A coalition of companies that vowed in 2011 to hire 100,000 veterans within a decade has made its goal seven years early, announcing today that 117,439 former servicemembers have since been provided jobs.

The group, calling itself the 100,000 Jobs Mission, has now promised to double its target to 200,000 veterans in jobs by 2020, according to the announcement.

"We have been able to make a difference in the lives of so many of our nation's veterans, and those veterans bring tremendous skills and experience to the workplace," said Maureen Casey, director of military and veterans affairs at JPMorgan Chase, one of initial 11 companies to form the coalition. It has since grown to 131 companies.

Veterans, particularly of the Iraq and Afghanistan war era, struggle to find work. While unemployment rates among all veterans have been tracking lower than the overall jobless percentage, younger veterans have remained mainly at about 10 percent unemployment.

In addition to being part of the jobs initiative, JPMorgan says it will invest \$1 million in higher-education efforts for veterans, including grants to Florida State College at Jacksonville, University of South Florida, The University of Texas at Arlington and San Diego State University.



HENDRICK SIMOES/Stars and Stripes

A tied-arch suspension bridge is transported in Bahrain on Thursday.

Bahrain bridge-moving project hits delays

By HENDRICK SIMOES

Stars and Stripes

MANAMA Bahrain — A 2,600-ton tied-arch suspension bridge that will connect Naqurah Support Activity Bahrain to 77 acres of new expansion land is on the move, but slower than officials had anticipated.

The initial plan to pre-position the bridge for a much-hyped move during the night from Thursday into Friday was delayed until Thursday morning while crews repaired a piece of equipment crucial to lift and move the approximately 400-foot bridge.

The bridge was lifted Thursday morning, but moving it has been stop-and-go because of unexpected issues.

The clock is ticking. Bahrain's Ministry of Works gave the U.S. Navy a seven-hour window to install the bridge overnight and to reopen the roadway, one of Bahrain's busiest, by 6 a.m. Friday. Fridays in Bahrain are the equivalent of Sundays in the United States, when traffic is minimal.

Naval Support Activity Bahrain, home to the U.S. 5th Fleet, has outgrown the capacity of the existing facilities and the bridge

is considered an important milestone in the base's growth. The expansion will provide space for a vehicle maintenance facility, a warehouse, a dining facility and two barracks to house about 1,000 sailors.

Army Corps of Engineers officials say the bridge project is the first of its kind in the Middle East District's history.

Even if Thursday night's installation is successful, the \$8 million bridge isn't scheduled to open until sometime in the summer.

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NATION



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, left, listens as CIA Director John Brennan, center, testifies Wednesday on Capitol Hill.

Intel chief: al-Qaida wants to attack US

By Kimberly Dozier
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Syrian militant group tied to al-Qaida, the al-Nusra Front, wants to attack the United States and is training a growing cadre of fighters from Europe, the Mideast and even the U.S., the top U.S. intelligence official said Wednesday.

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told the Senate Intelligence Committee that such al-Qaida groups in Syria have started camps "to train people to go back to their countries" — one of the newest threats emerging in the past year to U.S. security. He said "al-Nusra Front, to name one ... does have aspirations for attacks on the homeland." Clapper didn't elaborate or offer evidence of al-Nusra's desire to attack the U.S. Clapper described the Syrian militants as one of the newest groups to join a diverse and widely dispersed network of al-Qaida-affiliated and other extremists bent on carrying out attacks in the U.S. He said more established groups like Yemen's al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula are more capable of carrying out attacks against the U.S., but described steep growth in numbers of fighters in Syria.

Clapper said out of an estimated 75,000 to 110,000 rebels battling the government of Bashar Assad in Syria, some 26,000 are extremists, and about 7,000 of them foreigners from some 50 countries, including Europe.

"Not only are fighters being drawn to Syria, but so are technologies and techniques that pose particular problems to our defenses," said committee chairwoman Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. She warned Syria could become "a launching point or way station for terrorists seeking to attack the United States or other nations."

Intelligence officials lambasted

Members of Senate Intelligence Committee accuse chiefs of lying, obstruction

By Sean Cockerham
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee lambasted the nation's top intelligence chiefs Wednesday, complaining of lies about gathering the phone records of Americans and failing to cooperate with Congress in an investigation of the CIA's controversial interrogation programs.

Committee members grilled Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and CIA Director John Brennan at the first intelligence committee hearing since President Barack Obama proposed reforms to the spy program.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., told them an ongoing "culture of misinformation" has undermined the public's trust in America's

intelligence leadership.

"That trust has been seriously undermined by senior officials' reckless reliance on secret interpretations of the law and battered by years of misleading and deceptive statements senior officials made to the American people," Wyden said.

He said the deception didn't help the fight against terrorism, but instead hid bad policy choices and violations of civil liberties. Wyden singled out Clapper's testimony to Congress last March that the National Security Agency does not collect data on millions of Americans, an assertion proved false by leaks by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

Clapper has since apologized, suggesting he misspoke. But five members of Congress, led by Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., called this

week for the White House to fire Clapper.

Clapper didn't address the charges of deception Wednesday. But he told the Senate panel that Snowden's leaks have damaged national security and exposed intelligence collection methods to terrorists.

"Snowden claims he's won and that his mission is accomplished," Clapper said. "If that is so, I call on him and his accomplices to facilitate the return of the remaining stolen documents that have not yet been exposed, to prevent even more damage to U.S. security."

Democratic Sens. Martin Heinrich, of New Mexico, and Mark Udall, of Colorado, said Brennan is failing to cooperate with the committee's probe of the CIA's post-9/11 detention and interrogation program.

Terrorism suspect claims NSA spying goes too far

The Associated Press

DENVER — A terrorism suspect is challenging the constitutionality of the National Security Agency's warrantless surveillance program, saying in a court document that spying by the federal government has gone too far.

In the motion filed in federal court in Denver on Wednesday with help from the American Civil Liberties Union, Jamshid Muhtorov also requested that prosecutors disclose more about how surveillance law was used in his case. Muhtorov denies the charges he faces.

Surveillance under current law "is exceptionally intrusive

and it is conducted by executive officers who enjoy broad authority to decide whom to monitor, when and for how long," Muhtorov argued.

"The statute that authorized the surveillance is unconstitutional," Muhtorov said in his motion, citing constitutional provisions against unreasonable search and seizure.

The ACLU called the filing the first of its kind. Justice Department spokesman Brian Fallon declined to comment.

Muhtorov was accused in 2012 of providing material support to an Uzbek terrorist organization active in Afghanistan.

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NATION

Reid seeking votes for a jobless benefits deal

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said Wednesday he is seeking votes for a new measure that would extend jobless benefits for three more months for people out of work the longest.

Reid, D-Nev., said he still lacks the 60 votes needed to end Republican delaying tactics against the measure. He told reporters that he has 58 or 59 votes and hopes his chamber will debate the package next week.

Democrats are pushing the bill amid an election-year effort to portray themselves as defenders of families struggling to make ends meet during the sluggish recovery from the Great Recession.

The proposal would cost a bit more than \$6 billion and be paid for by giving large corporations more time to meet their pension obligations, Democratic officials said.

That would raise federal revenue over the short term because it

would lower companies' pension fund contributions, which are tax-deductible. It would reduce federal revenue later as corporate pension contributions increase.

The bill's details were described by Democratic officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss private talks.

Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., has been a leading Republican in efforts to round up GOP support for a compromise. Nevada's unemployment rate of 8.8 percent last month was one of the nation's highest.

"Sen. Heller is continuing to talk with his Democratic and Republican colleagues about a number of ideas to move unemployment insurance legislation forward," Heller spokesman Chandler Smith said.

The program expired on Dec. 28, cutting off benefits for more than 1 million long-term unemployed people.

Republicans plan agenda as alternative to Obama's

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Armed with fresh political momentum for the first time in months, House Republicans headed to a Maryland retreat Wednesday looking to shape a unified message on immigration, debt and health care that could offer voters an alternative rather than just persistent opposition to President Barack Obama.

The three-day workshop will say a lot about the party's plans and fate in 2014. The Republicans start with a powerful motivator — dogged opposition to Obama, whose approval ratings remain about 40 percent and who is proving a serious liability to Demo-

crats in more conservative states. Obama gave Republicans new ammunition in his State of the Union address Tuesday night, as he vowed to use his executive power to implement policies Congress won't. Republicans saw his action as a gift. They think they can express outrage while also looking statesmanlike.

"Rather than trying to write laws from the Oval office, he should put down his pen, pick up the Constitution, and start working with Congress to solve the problems facing our nation," said Rep. Steve Scalise, of Louisiana, chairman of the conservative Republican Study Committee.



CHARLES DHARAPAN/AP

Vice President Joe Biden, left, and House Speaker John Boehner, of Ohio, listen Tuesday as President Barack Obama gives his State of the Union address on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Obama hopes myRA will be first step on retirement

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even proponents of President Barack Obama's new retirement-savings program readily concede it won't be a cure-all for a nation of people who are saving far too little for their golden years. Many Americans won't be able to participate initially, and those who do may find the benefits are modest.

Yet the Obama administration is hoping that the savings program — dubbed "myRA," for "my IRA" — will serve as a call to action, spurring Congress to take more sweeping steps to shore up retirement security as company pensions become a thing of the past. Given a presidential boost, like-minded lawmakers already are

pushing new legislation to vastly expand the number of Americans who put away cash for retirement.

"This is a small, first step," said Nancy Leamon, AARP's executive vice president. "We think it is starting to generate a debate. Our hope is there can be action."

Aiming to help the roughly half of Americans with no retirement plan at work, Obama announced in his State of the Union speech Tuesday that the Treasury would create new "starter" savings accounts. The program is geared toward low- and middle-income Americans who lack the up-front investment that many commercial IRAs require. Starting with as little as \$25, savers could invest a little each month in Treasury bonds and then convert the

accounts into traditional IRAs once the savings grow.

The idea is actually contained in a broader retirement proposal that Obama has been asking Congress to take up for years in his annual budget request. Obama wants all workers to be automatically enrolled in IRAs unless they specifically opt out. Under one scenario, monthly paycheck deductions would be invested in bonds unless workers choose another option.

Congress hasn't acted on the proposal. So Obama is carving out the part he can accomplish without Congress and hoping that by raising the issue, lawmakers will feel pressure to act and the remaining pieces will fall into place.

After making a threat, NY official calls reporter to apologize

BY DAVID B. CARUSO

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. Rep. Michael Grimm has never been shy about promoting himself as a tough guy.

When he ran for Congress in 2009, he highlighted his service in the Marines and as an undercover FBI agent. After his election, he brushed off allegations that he'd once brandished a gun during an early morning altercation at a New York City nightclub by saying he was armed but hadn't verbally threatened to kill anyone.

"That's not my personality. I don't need to speak that way," he told a writer for the New Yorker. "A guy with a gun who knows how to use it doesn't need to say anything."

The Staten Island Republican's temperament is at the forefront again after he was caught on camera threatening a television news reporter.

The confrontation occurred on a balcony in the Capitol following the president's State of the Union address Tuesday night. Grimm walked out of an interview with the New York City cable news station NY1 when reporter Michael Scotto tried to throw in a last question about a long-running FBI investigation into his campaign finances.

After Scotto finished his report, Grimm stormed back, leaned into Scotto and said, "Let me be clear to you. If you ever do that to me again, I'll throw you off this (expletive) balcony."

Scotto protested, saying he was

asking "a valid question."

Grimm glanced at the camera, leaned in again and said, "No. No. You're not man enough. You're not man enough. I'll break you in half. Like a boy."

Asked about it soon afterward, Grimm was defiant. In a statement, he said he felt Scotto had been disrespectful and unprofessional.

But after a morning of heavy public criticism, he phoned Scotto to apologize.

"He said he overreacted," Scotto told The Associated Press. "He said that the behavior that he showed wasn't him. So I accepted the apology."

Later Wednesday, Grimm told a group of reporters that he would probably be getting an earful from his mother.



EVAN VUCCI/AP

NY1 political reporter Michael Scotto takes a phone call from Rep. Michael Grimm, R-N.Y., in Washington on Wednesday, a day after Grimm threatened Scotto.

NATION

2 days after snow, Atlanta roads still dicey

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The snow and sleet had stopped falling and traffic was moving again around Atlanta following a crippling storm, but officials warned that ice-covered roads remained a threat for drivers Thursday morning.

State officials were concerned with subfreezing overnight lows potentially leading to layers of black ice coating roads that might appear to be safe.

Temperatures dipped into the teens overnight in the Atlanta

area. Although it was supposed to be in the high 30s Thursday, it was forecast to dip below freezing again before rising into the 50s on Friday.

Heeding the warnings, school districts and state and local governments stretching from northwest to coastal Georgia announced that offices and classrooms would remain closed Thursday.

A storm that dropped just inches of snow Tuesday wreaked havoc across much of the South, closing highways, grounding flights and contributing to at least a dozen

deaths from traffic accidents and a mobile home fire. Yet it was Atlanta, home to major corporations and the world's busiest airport, that was Exhibit A for how a Southern city could be sent reeling by winter weather that, in the North, might be no more than an inconvenience.

The Georgia State Patrol responded to more than 1,460 crashes between Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening, including two fatal crashes, and it reported more than 175 injuries.

At Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta

International Airport, more than 400 flights in and out were canceled by 6 a.m. Thursday, according to data from the flight tracking service FlightAware. Many of those flights were canceled before the day began.

Thousands of schoolchildren either slept on the buses that tried and failed to get them home or on cots in school gymnasiums. All were back home by Wednesday evening, officials said.

State transportation crews spent much of Wednesday rescuing stranded drivers and moving

disabled and abandoned vehicles that littered the interstates, medians and shoulders. Gov. Nathan Deal said emergency workers, police, and the National Guard would help drivers Thursday to recover their cars and would provide them with fuel if necessary.

Crews planned to use four-wheel-drive vehicles to take motorists to vehicles they abandoned to reclaim them Thursday. State officials also said they were creating a database to help motorists locate vehicles that were towed to impound lots.

Ship on which hundreds fell ill back in port

By SAMANTHA HENRY
The Associated Press

BAYONNE, N.J. — Kim Waite was especially disappointed to fall ill while treating herself to a Caribbean cruise after completing cancer treatment. The London woman thought she was the only sick one as her husband wheeled her to the infirmary — until the elevator doors opened to reveal hundreds of people vomiting into bags, buckets or on the floor, whatever was closest.

"I started crying. I couldn't believe it," Waite said. "I was in shock."

Waite was among nearly 700 passengers and crewmembers who became ill during a cruise on Royal Caribbean's Explorer of the Seas. The voyage was cut short and the ship returned to port Wednesday in New Jersey, where it was being sanitized in preparation for its next voyage.

Long lines of weary travelers arrived to freezing temperatures in Bayonne as Waite and other passengers recalled days of misery holed up in their rooms with extreme

stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea.

"I've never wanted to go home so much in my life," Waite said. "I've never slept so much in my life, and I've got no sunbat."

Health investigators suspect norovirus, but lab results are not expected until later this week. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said its latest count puts the number of those sickened at 630 passengers and 54 crewmembers. The ship, scheduled for a 10-day cruise, was carrying 3,050 passengers.

If norovirus is to blame, it would be one of the largest norovirus outbreaks on a cruise ship in the last 20 years, the CDC said. A 2006 norovirus outbreak on a Carnival Cruise Lines ship also sickened close to 700.

Norovirus — once known as Norwalk virus — is highly contagious. It can be picked up from an infected person, contaminated food or water or by touching contaminated surfaces. Sometimes mistaken for the stomach flu, the virus causes bouts of vomiting and diarrhea for a few days.

The cruise line said most guests who fell

ill were up and about as the ship headed to port. It said seven people were still sick when the ship reached Bayonne, but none had to be hospitalized.

Royal Caribbean is providing all guests a 50 percent refund of their cruise fares and an additional 50 percent future cruise credit. It's also reimbursing airline change fees and accommodations for guests who had to change plans for traveling home.

Stricken guests who were confined to their staterooms are being provided a credit of one future cruise day for each day of confinement.

The ship will be sanitized, and no one will be allowed aboard for a period of more than 24 hours as an extra precaution, the cruise line said.

Explorer of the Seas is on track to depart at its originally scheduled time Friday afternoon on its next cruise, a nine-night trip with port calls in Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, a Royal Caribbean spokeswoman said.



MEL EVANS/AP

Passengers disembark from the Explorer of the Seas cruise ship to waiting buses after it docked in Bayonne, N.J., on Wednesday.

California 'house of horrors' loaded with hundreds of live, dead snakes

The Associated Press

SANTA ANA, Calif. — The smell wafting from the house was bad, to put it mildly. It was the result of more than 200 dead pythons, 200 living snakes and a rodent infestation.

It was bad enough to send veteran investigators gasping for air. Bad enough to make normally poised TV reporters hold their noses. Bad enough to make much of a neighborhood gag.

"House of horrors: That's the best way to describe it," Sondra Berg, supervisor for the Santa Ana Police Department's Animal Services Division, said after coming out of the five-bedroom Orange County home of elementary school teacher William Buchman.

"I mean, there's so many dead snakes ... ranging from dead for months to just dead. There's an infestation of rats and mice all over the house. There are rats and mice in plastic storage tubs that are actually cannibalizing each other," Berg said.

Buchman, 53, was arrested for investigation on neglect in the care of animals, police Cpt. Anthony Bertagna said. He remained in



BRUCE CHAMBERS, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

Television reporters react to the stench emanating from a Santa Ana house with dead and decaying snakes inside while interviewing Sondra Berg, supervisor of Santa Ana, Calif., police animal services.

police custody late Wednesday.

Five months earlier, that smell had driven neighbors to complain about the home, with some of them

speculating there was a dead person inside.

"It got so bad as to where my wife would throw up," next-door

neighbor Forest Long Sr. said. "She'd get out of the car and run into the house."

Long said he had once been

friendly with Buchman and that they would get together to watch televised sports.

But Buchman, who lost the mother who had lived with him a few years earlier and had since lived alone, stopped coming around about a year ago, Long said.

"Something changed in Bill. Yes, it did," he said. "Something triggered it because I couldn't even think that that was going on."

Buchman has not yet had a court appearance or been formally charged, and it wasn't clear if he had an attorney. The Newport-Mesa Unified School District, where he works, declined comment, saying it was a police matter.

Police served a warrant on the home Tuesday morning and found four of the five bedrooms stacked from floor to ceiling and wall to wall with plastic bins on wooden and metal racks, Berg said. They contained more than 400 snakes in all — 180 live ones and at least 220 dead ones.

Some of the snakes were little more than skeletons. Others, only recently dead, were covered with flies and maggots.

NATION

Going through airport security with legal pot

Washington, Colorado have few ways to stop carry-on marijuana

The Associated Press

DENVER — Among the many oddities that have arisen from marijuana legalization in Washington and Colorado is this: It can be easier to get through airport security with a bag of weed than a bottle of water.

At Washington's airports, including Seattle-Tacoma International, there's nothing police can do to prevent travelers from flying with pot in their carry-on or checked luggage, provided it doesn't exceed the state legal limit of one ounce. Instead, airport officials say, officers simply recommend that travelers leave it in their cars, toss it or have a friend pick it up.

But in Colorado, where the legal pot law gives property owners more authority to restrict the drug, some airports have banned marijuana possession and enacted penalties, including fines as high as \$2,500 and a jail stint at the airport in Colorado Springs.

"Carrying marijuana in a civilian aircraft is illegal under federal regulations," said airport spokeswoman Kim Melchor. "That's why we implemented the rule, to prevent marijuana from being on a civilian aircraft. She added that the airport has used to levy a fine and that a drop-box where travelers can toss excess weed hasn't been used.

The situation underscores the difficulty officials in both states have as they try to prevent pot

'How do we invite people here, tell them they can use a product and then prosecute them when they try to leave the state?'

Pitkin County (Colo.) Sheriff Joe DiSalvo

from leaving their borders — one of several conditions the Department of Justice imposed when it allowed the legal pot experiments to proceed.

An attorney with Smart Colorado, which opposed legalization, worried about tourists transporting tiny, concentrated products, such as hardened hash oil that has enough THC, pot's primary psychoactive chemical, for hundreds of uses.

"For the size of a traveler's shampoo bottle, you can serve an entire urban high school and get them stoned," Rachel O'Bryan said.

Voters in the two states approved legalizing marijuana for adults over 21 in 2012, but the laws don't allow people to take pot out of state. Federal law prohibits marijuana possession, on a plane or anywhere else. Anyone who touched down in the other 48 states where marijuana is illegal would also be violating state law.

TSA agents normally hand over pot cases to local law enforcement officers, who have little recourse in Colorado and Washington. At Sea-Tac, they rely on a "totality

of the circumstances" test to decide whether to make an arrest or investigate further. Port of Seattle spokesman Perry Cooper said. Is the passenger combative or assaultive, or carrying vast amounts of cash?

Detention might be warranted for some of those things, but not for the pot itself, he noted.

Airports say there have been few incidents where passengers have been stopped carrying marijuana. The Port of Denver banned pot at Denver International, with fines of up to \$999. No one's been fined yet.

At the urging of Pitkin County Sheriff Joe DiSalvo, Aspen's airport is installing an "amnesty box" where travelers can drop any leftover weed before taking to the skies. In the few cases where travelers have been caught trying to take pot on a plane, they have received polite reminders and no legal consequences.

"How do we invite people here, tell them they can use a product and then prosecute them when they try to leave the state?" DiSalvo asked.



AP

The firing squad execution chamber at the Utah State Prison in Draper, Utah, is shown in 2010.

States consider taking a more old-fashioned approach to executions

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — With lethal-injection drugs in short supply and new questions looming about their effectiveness, lawmakers in some death penalty states are considering bringing back relics of a more gruesome past: firing squads, electrocutions and gas chambers.

Most states abandoned those execution methods more than a generation ago in a bid to make capital punishment more palatable to the public and to a judicial system worried about inflicting cruel and unusual punishments that violate the Constitution.

To some elected officials, the drug shortages and recent legal challenges are beginning to make lethal injection seem too vulnerable to complications.

"This isn't an attempt to time-warrior back into the 1850s or the wild, wild West or anything like that," said Missouri state Rep. Rick Brattin, who this month proposed making firing squads an option for executions. "It's just that I foresee a problem, and I'm trying to come up with a solution that will be the most humane yet most economical for our state."

Brattin, a Republican, said questions about the injection drugs are sure to end up in court, delaying executions and forcing states to examine alternatives. It's not fair, he said, for relatives of murder victims to wait years, even decades, to see justice served while lawmakers and judges debate execution methods.

Like Brattin, a Wyoming lawmaker this month offered a bill allowing the firing squad. Missouri's attorney general and a state lawmaker have raised the notion of rebuilding the state's gas chamber. A Virginia lawmaker wants to make electrocution an option if lethal-injection drugs aren't available.

'This isn't an attempt to time-warrior back into the 1850s or the wild, wild West or anything like that.'

Rep. Rick Brattin
R-Missouri

If adopted, those measures could return states to the more harrowing imagery of previous decades, when inmates were hanged, electrocuted or shot to death by marksmen.

States began moving to lethal injection in the 1980s in the belief that powerful sedatives and heart-stopping drugs would replace the violent spectacles with a more clinical affair while limiting, if not eliminating, an inmate's pain.

The total number of U.S. executions has declined in recent years — from a peak of 98 in 1999 to 39 last year. Some states have turned away from the death penalty entirely. Many have cases tied up in court. Those that carry on with executions find them increasingly difficult to conduct because of the scarcity of drugs and doubts about how well they work.

In recent years, European drug makers have stopped selling the lethal chemicals to prisons because they do not want their products used to kill.

At least two recent executions are also raising concerns about the drugs' effectiveness. Last week, Ohio inmate Dennis McGuire took 26 minutes to die by injection, gasping repeatedly as he lay on a gurney with his mouth opening and closing. On Jan. 9, Oklahoma inmate Michael Lee Wilson's final words were, "I feel my whole body burning."

Police: Heroin sold in McDonald's Happy Meals

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — An employee of a McDonald's restaurant in Pittsburgh was charged Wednesday with selling heroin in Happy Meals to customers using the coded request "I'd like to order a toy."

Authorities made the arrest after an informant told them that an employee was selling the drug. Customers looking for heroin were instructed to go through the drive-thru and say, "I'd like to order

a toy," said Mike Manko, spokesman for District Attorney Stephen A. Zappala Jr. The customer would then drive to the window, hand over the money and get a Happy Meal box containing heroin in exchange, Manko said.

Undercover agents set up a drug buy and arrested Shania Dennis, 26. Authorities said they found 10 bags of heroin in a Happy Meal box and recovered another 50 bags from the suspect.



Scientist: W.Va. residents inhaling formaldehyde

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — State officials and a water company strongly disputed a scientist's claim Wednesday that residents were likely breathing in traces of formaldehyde while showering after the chemical spill, saying the chemical that tainted the water supply produces the carcinogen only at extremely high temperatures.

The dispute between the scientist and the officials underscored

the steady stream of sometimes conflicting information weary West Virginians have had to digest over the past weeks while seeking certainty that their water is safe.

The crude MCHM that spilled into the water supply on Jan. 9 ultimately can break down into formaldehyde, West Virginia Environmental Quality Board vice-chairman Scott Simonon told a state legislative panel Wednesday. Simonon, who is also an environmental scientist at Marshall

University, said the formaldehyde showed up in three water samples at a downtown Charleston restaurant as part of testing funded by a law firm representing businesses that lost money during the spill.

State Bureau for Public Health Commissioner Dr. Letitia Tierney — the state's top health officer — called Simonon's presentation "totally unfounded."

West Virginia American Water called Simonon's opinion "misleading and irresponsible."

WORLD



COURTESY OF HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH VIA DIGITAL GLOBE/AP

Two satellite images show the Masha al-Arbacene neighborhood in Hama, Syria, on Sept. 28, 2012, left, and again about two weeks later.

Report: Syrian government razed thousands of residential buildings

By RYAN LUCAS
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Syrian government used controlled explosives and bulldozers to raze thousands of residential buildings, in some cases entire neighborhoods, in a campaign that appeared designed to punish civilians sympathetic to the opposition or to cause disproportionate harm to them, an international human rights group said Thursday.

The demolitions took place between July 2012 and July 2013 in seven pro-opposition districts in and around the capital, Damascus, and the central city of Hama, according to a 38-page report by Human Rights Watch. The New York-based group said the deliberate destruction violated international law, and it called for an immediate end to the practice.

"Wiping entire neighborhoods off the map is not a legitimate tactic of war," said Ole Solvang, emergencies researcher for HRW. "These unlawful demolitions are the latest additions to a long list of crimes committed by the Syrian government."

Human Rights Watch said many of the demolished buildings were apartment blocks and that thousands of families have lost their

"Wiping entire neighborhoods off the map is not a legitimate tactic of war."

Ole Solvang
Human Rights Watch

homes because of the destruction.

It said government officials and media have described the demolitions as part of urban planning or an effort to remove illegally constructed buildings. Human Rights Watch said its investigation determined that military forces supervised the demolitions, which in each instance targeted areas that had recently been hit by fighting and were widely understood to be pro-opposition.

There also is no indication that pro-government districts have been targeted for similar controlled destruction, HRW said.

The neighborhoods targeted were Masha al-Arbacene and Wadi al-Jouz in Hama, and Qaboun, Dadamoun, Barzeh and the Mezzeh military airport in Damascus, as well as Harran al-Awamid outside the capital.

The report includes satellite images of the neighborhoods before and after the demolitions, providing a window on the scale of the

destruction.

Buildings in the Hama neighborhood of Masha al-Arbacene, a wedge-shaped district bordered by highways on three sides, are clearly visible in a photo dated Sept. 28, 2012. In a second photo from Oct. 13, the buildings have been pulverized into a white smudge, while the adjacent neighborhoods remain untouched.

Residents told HRW that the government bulldozers directed by the military moved in after the rebels retreated from the area in the face of an army offensive.

Another Hama neighborhood, Wadi al-Jouz, faced a similar fate.

HRW cited one woman who lived near Wadi al-Jouz who said the army came to her district afterward and announced over loudspeakers "that they would destroy our neighborhood like they destroyed Wadi al-Jouz and Masha al-Arbacene so single bullet be fired from here."

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Gunmen and suicide bombers staged a brazen assault on a government building in Baghdad, officials said, killing two people in the latest such attack in the heart of the Iraqi capital by militants trying to undermine further the Shiite-led government's shaky authority.

The firefight at a state-run transportation company was one of several attacks that left 11 dead across the city and came as Iraq grapples with a stubborn insurgency in the country's western Anbar province. Government troops are trying to oust al-Qaida-linked fighters and their allies from cities in the area.

At least six gunmen were involved in Thursday's attack, Interior Ministry spokesman Saad Maan Ibrahim said. The attackers stormed the state-run Company for Transportation on Baghdad's Canal Street, where numerous government offices are located.

The police shot and killed four of the militants inside the building, while the other two blew themselves up at the entrance, Maan told The Associated Press in a phone interview. He also said the standoff ended with at least one employee and a policeman killed in the attack, but gave no details on how they died.

Iraqi troops sealed off the area as armed vehicles rushed to the scene. At least one army helicopter was seen hovering overhead.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks. Coordinated and brazen attacks against Shiites, security forces and government buildings are frequently the work of al-Qaida's affiliates in Iraq, which has been emboldened by the successes of its fellow militants in the civil war next-door in Syria and by wide-

spread Sunni anger at the Shiite-led government.

Last year, insurgents — some of them suicide bombers — unleashed a large and carefully planned assault on the Iraqi Justice Ministry that included car bombs and gunmen disguised as police, killing at least 24 people.

In that attack, for which al-Qaida took credit, about six gunmen wearing police uniforms stormed the ministry's building, and a one-hour battle erupted between the intruders and the security force. The security forces cleared the building after killing all the attackers.

Also Thursday, a parked car bomb ripped through a market in Baghdad's northern Kasra neighborhood, killing at least four people and wounding 11, a police officer and a medical official said. Another car bomb exploded at a bus station in Baghdad's eastern Ur neighborhood, killing five civilians and wounding 11, police and medical officials said.

All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

The bombings in Baghdad occurred as Iraqi security forces and allied tribal militia fight to recapture parts of the Anbar provincial capital, Ramadi, and the city center of nearby Fallujah from al-Qaida-linked rebels and other groups. Clashes continued Thursday, with state TV saying at least 24 militants were killed. No other details were given.

Violence has escalated in Iraq over the past year. Last year, the country saw the highest death toll since the worst of the country's sectarian bloodletting began to subside in 2007, according to United Nations figures. The U.N. said violence killed 8,868 last year.

Ukraine leader takes sick leave amid crisis

By JIM HEINTZ
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's embattled president is taking sick leave, his office said Thursday, a surprise development that left unclear how efforts to resolve the country's political crisis would move forward. Protesters have been calling for his resignation for two months.

Viktor Yanukovich, 63, has an acute respiratory illness and a high fever, a statement on the presidential website said. There was no indication of how long he might be on leave or whether he would be able to do any work. He wasn't known to have any previous health issues.

Yanukovich is still in charge of the country, spokesman Andriy Lysenko told The Associated Press. Under Ukraine's constitu-

tion, the president can't transfer his powers to anyone, he added.

The announcement that Yanukovich



Yanukovich

was taking sick leave prompted skeptical reactions and even the suggestion that it was a ruse to take him out of power — as in the attempted coup against

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991.

"I don't remember official statements on Viktor Yanukovich's colds. But I remember well when on Aug. 19, 1991, the vice president of the USSR, Gennady Yanayev, announced the serious

illness of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev," political commentator Vitaly Portnikov wrote on his Facebook page.

Gorbachev's purported illness was reported on Aug. 19, 1991, as hard-line Communists opposed to his reforms attempted an unsuccessful coup against him and held him under house arrest. Although the coup failed, it accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union, which officially was dissolved four months later.

Yanukovich has faced two months of large protests that have often paralyzed Kiev, the capital. The protests started after he backed out of a long-awaited agreement to deepen ties with the European Union, but they quickly came to encompass a wide array of discontent over corruption, heavy-handed police and dubious courts.



EREM LUKATSK/AP

A protester guards the barricade in front of riot police in Kiev, Ukraine, on Thursday.

WORLD

US official: N. Korean nuke reactor restarted

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—North Korea has followed through on its threat to advance its nuclear weapons program, the top U.S. intelligence official said Wednesday, while a research institute pointed to signs the communist country is preparing to launch bigger rockets.

Those developments will add to the international concern about the intentions of young leader

Kim Jong Un, amid scant sign that negotiations to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions will resume anytime soon.

In written testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said North Korea has expanded the size of the uranium enrichment facility at the Nyongbyon nuclear complex and has restarted a reactor that was used for plutonium production before it was shut down in 2007.

Those findings concur with assessments published last summer by think tanks that monitor North Korea's nuclear program using commercial satellite imagery. South Korean intelligence also has said the reactor has restarted.

"North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs pose a serious threat to the United States and to the security environment in East Asia," Clapper said. He said the North is committed to developing a long-range missile

that can threaten the U.S.

North Korea announced its intention to "adjust and alter" its existing nuclear facilities after an underground, atomic test explosion last February, backtracking from denuclearization commitments. That announcement came during a period of high tension when the North issued threats of a nuclear strike on the United States.

Tensions have eased some since then, and the North says it

wants to improve ties with South Korea. The North has said it is willing to resume, without preconditions, the six-nation aid-for-disarmament talks from which it withdrew in 2009.

But North Korea is denouncing upcoming U.S.-South Korean military exercises and appears to be moving away from the U.S. demand for a concrete demonstration of its commitment to denuclearization before the talks can restart.

In North Korea, methamphetamine use carries little stigma

By BARBARA DEMICK
Los Angeles Times

YANJI, China — After the North Korean coal mine where she worked stopped paying salaries, Park Kyung Ok tried her hand at business.

Buttons and zippers, candy and dried squid, fabric, plastic tarpaulins, men's suits and cigarettes.

"I sold just about everything," said Park, 44.

It wasn't until she started hawking methamphetamine in 2007, she said, that she was able to earn a living.

Methamphetamine — known as *orum*, or "ice" — is a rare com-

modity manufactured and sold in North Korea, where most factories sit idle, the equipment rusted or looted. The North Korean government once produced the drug, and others that are illicit in the West. Resourceful entrepreneurs have since set up their own small facilities, and evidence suggests that they are distributing the drug beyond the nation's borders.

Last month, five suspected drug smugglers — Chinese, British and Thai men among them — appeared in federal court in New York, extradited from Thailand, over a plot to smuggle 220 pounds of crystal meth to the United States. They said their prod-

uct originated in North Korea.

A Harvard University researcher, Sheena Chestnut Greitens, has tracked 16 drug busts from 2008 to the present in China involving crystal meth from North Korea in quantities of up to 22 pounds.

"Meth is a product you can make in bathtubs or trailers," Greitens said. "You have a wide range of people involved in production and trafficking."

Park said she got into the meth business fresh from a divorce, while struggling to support her children and a disabled sister in Hoeryong, a hardscrabble mining town of 130,000 on the Chinese border.

Park used to travel to another North Korean city, Chongjin, to buy meth that she would carry back hidden in a candy box. She would sell it behind the counter at a bicycle parts store at the public market. Hidden among the spare parts were metal plates, burners and other drug paraphernalia.

She usually paid the equivalent of \$15 for a gram of high-quality product, which she would then cut with cheaper meth and divide into 12 smaller portions to resell for a few dollars' profit.

"It was just enough money that I could buy rice to eat and coal for heating," said Park, who was interviewed in China and, like most

North Korean defectors, used an assumed name.

North Koreans say there is little stigma attached to meth use. Some take it to treat colds or boost their energy; students take it to work late. The drug also helps curb appetites in a country where food is scarce. It is offered up as casually as a cup of tea, North Koreans say.

"If you go to somebody's house it is a polite way to greet somebody by offering them a sniff," said Lee Saera, 43, of Hoeryong, also interviewed in China. "It is like drinking coffee when you're sleepy, but ice is so much better."

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FAITH

Does God care who wins the Super Bowl?

By KARA YORIO
The (Hackensack, N.J.) Record

More than 100 million people will watch the Super Bowl on TV, with another 78,000 packing MetLife Stadium, but will there be another set of eyes looking down on the Meadowlands? Could an Almighty fan be preparing to pull up a lounge chair a week from Sunday, take in the game and orchestrate the outcome?

More than 20 percent of Americans believe God has a say in who wins sporting events, according to a survey conducted this month by the Public Religion Research Institute.

Religion and sports, especially football, are deeply connected in American culture. Fans pray for victories, and many believe that players who pray are more likely to win. According to the institute's poll, 48 percent of Americans believe athletes of faith are rewarded with good health and success. That number jumps to 62 and 65 percent when asking white evangelical Protestants and minority Protestants, respectively.

So are the truly faithful rewarded with success on the field?

"It's one of those tricky questions," said former quarterback and current NFL Network analyst Kurt Warner, a devout Christian. "I believe God has your best interest in mind. How that correlates to winning and losing football games, I'm not fully sure."

Warner won and lost a Super Bowl in his 12-year NFL career, during which he played for the Rams, Giants and Cardinals.

"Do I believe that as a son of God that my life is important to him? No question about it," said Warner who was voted MVP when he led the St. Louis Rams to the Super Bowl title in 2000. "Where do we draw the line between what's important to him and what's not? I believe it's all important to him. But I don't know

how exactly that fits into winning and losing per se."

We put the question to some members of the clergy: Does God care who wins the Super Bowl?
"No," said Rabbi Arthur Weiner, of the Jewish Community Center of Paramus Congregation Beth Tikvah. "And it's not a question of God (having) bigger things on his plate. We live in a world where we have a religious understanding that God cares about everything, but the truth is we don't believe that this is the kind of thing God needs to or should be getting involved with."

The Rev. George McGovern, of Oradell, N.J., an interdenominational Christian minister who is team chaplain for the Giants and Yankees, agrees.

"I don't think so," he said when posed the same question. "I hate to be his spokesman because he might care. I don't know. He hasn't revealed that to me. He might be a secret fan of one of the teams...."

"My thought is God is not nearly as concerned with the performance or the play on the field, as he is the hearts of the guys who are performing or playing on the field. What are their motives, effort, character; are they men of integrity? That kind of stuff is much more important to God than the scoreboard."

The effort that affects the scoreboard creates a gray area for some.

"My gut would say I don't think so," said the Rev. Warren Hall, director of campus ministry at Seton Hall University. "I do think what goes into it is what is the effort on behalf of who was playing. I think that is more so what makes an out-

come happen. So if, therefore, you want to say that effort was a strength given to a team by God, then we'd say well, yeah, God was part of that outcome."

Hall pointed out that people should remember that winning isn't the only reward. Losing can have its merits.

"Maybe I don't know what that benefit is just yet, maybe it's going to strengthen my character or maybe it's going to motivate me to be better," said Hall, who is teaching a course at Seton Hall on sports and spirituality. "I think we have to look a little more deeply."

Most sports fans don't think past wins and losses and some are uncomfortable with a player's public profession of faith.

Hall said. At the same time, the truly faithful can be disappointed by their teammates who don't follow the life they proclaim.

"People are always watching," Warner said. "People always want to see if what you say is backed up by how you live, especially when it comes to faith. ... I guess that's what disappointed me the most, when you say one thing and then you saw a completely different kind of living. Nobody is perfect. We all misrepresent our faith at times or even numerous times but to say something very forthright and act outright contradictory. I always thought that would hurt the cause."

Kurt Warner

NFL Network analyst,
Super Bowl MVP and devout Christian

Weiner agrees.

"I am not overly impressed when I see certain people who have not been paragons of virtuous or moral behavior doing some great athletic feat then praising God because it seems very contrived," he said. "But if it's an honorable person who's be-

haved nicely and played by the rules kicks a field goal or scores a touchdown and at that moment acknowledges his creator, I think it's a wonderful thing."

For Christian athletes, there is a natural intersection of sports and religion, McGovern said.

"The sports culture almost puts an athlete or coach in a place where his heart can understand the Gospel because his heart is being shaped by the nature of sport — discipline, teamwork, respect for authority," he said. "Those are three pillars of the religious life. ... All the things that go into making an athlete a good athlete and a great athlete are the same ingredients that go into a man living a life of faith."

McGovern believes feelings associated with faith are particularly intense in the NFL, where the emotion, violence and possibility of serious injury are so close to the surface. It's a level of vulnerability that, he said, few others can understand.

"My guess is there are guys who build these skyscrapers and they stand on these girders and they're 500 feet above the ground, I have a feeling they have some similar moments emotionally where they say, 'God please keep my balance, God I don't want to fall,'" he said. "When a human being is put in a very risky, dangerous situation, he tends to look up for help. That's just the way we're wired."

McGovern and Warner caution that people not read too much into the fact that faith seems to be announced after a win.

"When you thank God, I don't think it's necessarily always about 'Thank you for making me win today' as much as it is 'Thank you for the gifts you've given me, the place you've put me in,'" said Warner. "But that is how people are going to read into it — you win a game or make a play and say, 'Thank you Jesus.' (People) think why does Jesus care about him making that great play? I think a Christian or anyone expressing their faith is doing it in a bigger manner than just thank you for letting me make that play."



AP PHOTO; ILLUSTRATION BY BEV SCHILLING/Stars and Stripes

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Family of injured man settles lawsuit with cops

OH CINCINNATI — The family of an Ohio man who suffered brain damage after police used a Taser stun gun on him while he was atop an 8-foot fence has settled their federal civil rights lawsuit for \$2.25 million.

Cincinnati attorney Al Gerhardtstein announced the settlement Wednesday between the Dublin family of Matthew Hook and the Columbus suburb of Perry Township, its board of trustees and a police officer.

Hook, then 23, was unarmed and fleeing police over a theft on Aug. 8, 2010. Perry Township Officer Shawn Bean stunned Hook in the back with a Taser as he climbed a fence, causing Hook to fall head-first onto the concrete below.

Plane lands safely after losing wheel in flight

CA EL MONTE — A small plane that lost its nose wheel in flight landed safely at a Southern California airport.

Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor said the single engine, four-seat Diamond DA40 touched down at El Monte Airport around 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Gregor said the wheel fell off during the approach and landed in Pioneer Park, about a mile southwest of the airport.

No injuries were reported. The FAA is investigating.

911 operator charged with misconduct

DE WILMINGTON — Wilmington police have arrested a 911 operator they say told a suspect that police had been notified about a shooting.

Alleshia Kennedy, 25, of Wilmington was also charged with official misconduct and hindering prosecution. Police said she was arrested Monday.

The News Journal of Wilmington reported that on Jan. 9, Kennedy told a 911 call from someone calling to correct an address given to another dispatcher about a shooting.

The News Journal reported that according to an affidavit, Kennedy then texted her boyfriend, whom she suspected had been involved in the shooting. Court documents said Kennedy told her boyfriend that the shooting had been reported at his address.

Court papers show that Kennedy did not put the address into the 911 system.

19th-century barn offered, but no takers

NH DURHAM — Anyone who would bid barn? You'd have to move it yourself, though, from its current site in Durham.

The 19th-century post-and-beam barn is in Durham's Historic District. Developer Orion Student Housing is planning to build a student housing and commercial complex nearby. Orion had offered it to anyone willing to haul it away.

THE CENSUS

60

The percentage of the water in the Great Lakes that is now under ice, the largest amount of ice cover on the lakes in at least 25 years, according to the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich. The ice cover this winter is a stark contrast to that of last winter, when the five lakes had only 38 percent cover. The long-term average of the lakes is about 50 percent. Of all the lakes, Lake Michigan has the smallest amount of ice — about 38 percent. Lake Erie, the shallowest of all the Great Lakes, is almost entirely covered.



Two women walk on the frozen surface of Lake Erie near Cleveland on Tuesday.



CRAIG RUTLE/AP

Dancers take the floor

Patrons of the New York City Ballet walk past a massive photograph featuring more than 80 dancers arranged in an array of poses at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York on Tuesday. The work of French-born artist JR was made by staging a photo shoot of the artists lying down pushing and pulling on white crinkled paper.

But it's a challenge — and it's costly. The structures need to be taken apart piece by piece, loaded onto a truck, transported to the new site and put back together again.

One farmer apparently expressed interest, but dropped the idea after learning it would cost up to \$300,000 to relocate.

School aide in modeling flap back on the job

MA FITCHBURG — A Massachusetts classroom aide who'd been placed on paid administrative leave after it was discovered she moonlighted as a bikini and lingerie model is back at work.

Fitchburg schools superintendent Andre Ravelle said Kaitlin Pearson, 23, was notified Monday she could return to work, and she resumed her duties Tuesday helping special-needs students at an

elementary school. Ravelle said in a statement that Pearson was reinstated after the school reviewed "all relevant information."

Pearson was suspended last week after someone anonymously sent a package of her racy photos to Ravelle and the local newspaper.

The story ignited a debate on what was appropriate in teachers' private lives.

Officials laud 'historic' joint cocaine seizure

FL MIAMI — In the early morning hours of Jan. 22, almost a thousand miles from Miami, U.S. Coast Guard officers aboard a small, highly-equipped aircraft spotted a dot on the ocean surface, skipping over waves and traveling at high speed.

A Coast Guard helicopter aboard a British Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel in the vicinity doing a joint operation gave chase. After

warning shots were fired, a vessel carrying several Coast Guard officers caught up with the go-fast boat and boarded.

On Tuesday morning, law enforcement officials at the U.S. Coast Guard Miami Beach station showcased their catch: 45 bricks of cocaine wrapped tightly in nylon burlap sacks reading "refined sugar" in Spanish. The coke haul had a street value in excess of \$37 million.

The Coast Guard called the Jan. 22 mission "historic," not because of the size of the haul — though it is large compared with past high seas drug busts — but because of the combined effort of the Coast Guard and the British Royal Fleet.

2 charged in Bitcoin money-laundering plan

NY NEW YORK — U.S. prosecutors say two men are charged with conspir-

ing to commit money laundering by selling more than \$1 million in Bitcoins to users of the black market website Silk Road, which lets users buy illegal goods anonymously.

Authorities said Charlie Shrem, 24, was arrested Sunday at New York's Kennedy Airport while Robert Faiella was arrested Monday at his Florida home.

Prosecutors say in a news release that Faiella sold Bitcoins to users seeking to buy illegal drugs on the site.

They say Shrem bought drugs on Silk Road and helped Faiella exchange more than \$1 million in cash for the tough-to-track digital currency Bitcoins so they could make illegal purchases.

Authorities have said Silk Road's San Francisco operator generated more than \$1 million in illicit business from January 2011 through September on the website before it was shut down.

From wire reports

FACES

Justin Bieber charged with assault

The Associated Press

Justin Bieber was charged with assault for allegedly hitting a Toronto limousine driver several times in the back of the head last month. The news broke just after the Canadian pop star's attorney entered a separate not guilty plea in Florida to drunken-driving and other charges.

The 19-year-old turned himself in to a Toronto police station Wednesday evening, arriving amid a crush of media and screaming fans. He was charged with one count of assault and is scheduled to appear in court in Toronto on Feb. 10.

Police allege Bieber was one of six people picked up by a limousine from a nightclub in the early-morning hours of Dec. 30, and there was an altercation while en route to a hotel.

Police said during the altercation one of the passengers hit the limo driver in the back of the head several times.

"The driver stopped the limousine, exited the vehicle and called police," a state-

ment said. "The man who struck him left the scene before police arrived."

Howard Weitzman, Bieber's attorney in California, said his client is innocent and declined to comment on the allegations against Bieber or any potential defense, saying it was now a matter for the court to handle. Weitzman said he expects the case to be treated as a summary offense, the equivalent of a misdemeanor in the U.S.

Brian Greenspan, Bieber's Canadian attorney, did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Toronto police said in late December that they were looking into allegations that a member of Bieber's entourage assaulted a limo driver who was ferrying the singer and several others. Police said at the time it was unclear whether Bieber was involved.

Elton John, Lady Gaga get GLAAD Media Award bids

Elton John, Lady Gaga and the movie

"Dallas Buyers Club" are among the nominees for awards presented by the gay advocacy group GLAAD.

The 25th annual GLAAD Media Awards honor outstanding images of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in categories including music, movies, TV and journalism.

On Thursday, GLAAD announced 93 nominees in the English-language categories, with cable channels earning 28 bids and broadcast networks receiving 11. Netflix earned its first nomination for the series "Orange Is the New Black." There are 37 Spanish-language nominees.

The GLAAD Media Awards will be presented in Los Angeles and New York this spring.

Other news

■ Oxfam International says Scarlett Johansson's support of an Israeli company operating in the West Bank was incom-



THE CANADIAN PRESS, NATHAN DENETTE/AP

Justin Bieber is swarmed by media and police officers as he turns himself in to city police in Toronto on Wednesday. Bieber was charged with assault.

patible with her role as an Oxfam Global Ambassador. Oxfam's statement followed Johansson's announcement Wednesday that she was resigning her Oxfam role because of a "fundamental difference of opinion." Oxfam says it accepted her resignation.

■ A judge in Los Angeles has reinstated a lawsuit by Nicolette Sheridan over her firing from "Desperate Housewives."



Lamar on Macklemore's wins: 'It's well-deserved'

The Associated Press

Kendrick Lamar is taking a philosophical approach to being shut out at the Grammy Awards. Lamar, one of Sunday night's top nominees with seven nods, won none, prompting four-time winner Macklemore to send a text of apology later that night after winning best rap album.

"It's well-deserved. He did what he did, man," Lamar told XXL magazine. "He went out there and hustled and grinded. Everything happens for a reason. The universe comes back around. That's how it go."

Lamar made the remarks after a performance of "Backstreet Freestyle" at rapper Dom Kennedy's show Tuesday night in New York. They came two days after The Recording Academy's voters gave Macklemore & Ryan Lewis three trophies in the rap categories, angering some in the hip-hop community. Macklemore & Ryan Lewis also won best new artist.

There was an effort by the academy's rap committee to exclude Macklemore & Ryan Lewis from the rap categories,

but it was overruled and the Seattle duo won best rap album for "The Heist" and best rap song and rap performance for "Thrift Shop," featuring Wanz — a pop hit that sold more than 7 million copies.

Macklemore said before the awards that he felt Lamar's "good kid, m.A.A.d. city" should win best rap album. He posted to Instagram a text he sent to Lamar following the awards that said in part: "It's weird and sucks that I robbed you."

XXL also asked Lamar if he felt the Grammys undervalued hip-hop. Only three rap acts — Jay Z, Macklemore and Lewis, and Lamar — performed during the telecast. All three were show highlights for different reasons.

"I definitely feel like they should always have more of the culture up in there, for sure, because we definitely stand out just like any other genre," Lamar said. "We part of the world. We part of the movement. So I think any awards, including the Grammys, should always push for more hip-hop because it's music as a whole, it's not just splitting different regions. Everything moves as far as sound and vibrations, and that's how it goes. And we are a part of that."

Kendrick Lamar was shut out at the Grammys on Sunday.

JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Nomination for 'Alone Yet Not Alone' for best song Oscar is revoked

By STEVEN ZEITCHIK
Los Angeles Times

Citing direct campaigning that created "the appearance of an unfair advantage," the Motion Picture Academy has revoked an Oscar nomination for "Alone Yet Not Alone," the tune from the eponymous faith-based movie that had been nominated for original song.

The academy said that Bruce Broughton, a music branch executive committee member who wrote the song's music, had emailed members of the branch during the voting period, a rule violation. No new nominee will be named; only four nominees will be eligible for the Oscar.

In a release Wednesday, the academy said the board of governors had made the decision in a

vote Tuesday night after concluding that Broughton "had emailed members of the branch to make them aware of his submission during the nominations voting period."

In the statement, academy President Cheryl Boone Isaacs said the actions were a perception problem, though she stopped short of saying that it actually had led to the song being shortlisted.

"No matter how well-intentioned the communication, using one's position as a former governor and current executive committee member to personally promote one's own Oscar submission creates the appearance of an unfair advantage," she said.

When it was announced as one of the nominees two weeks ago, "Alone Yet Not Alone" raised eyebrows among pundits and carp-

ing among non-nominated rivals. The song, whose lyrics were written by Dennis Spiegel, came from an independent movie about 18th-century colonists that few had heard of.

The academy has revoked nominees' tickets before because of campaigning-based rule violations. But the revocation of a nomination is extremely rare, if not unprecedented.

WORLD

Hard for women to respect elders in India

Rural councils rebuked after using rape, honor killings as punishment

By ASHOK SHARMA
AND NIRMALA GEORGE
The Associated Press

NEW DELHI — In the hours after her 6-year-old daughter was kidnapped, screaming in terror as she was dragged away from home, Rimaila Awungshi appealed for help from the most powerful authority she knew — the council of elders in her rural Indian village.

In her anguish, Awungshi told the village leaders what happened. She was a single mother to a beloved little girl named Yin-ring, whose name translates as "living in God's shelter." Her ex-boyfriend had refused to marry her or care for their child. But as the years passed and he never found a wife, his family demanded custody.

"But I am poor, and I have no brothers, and the village authority doesn't care," Awungshi said in a telephone interview from her home in remote northeast India.

Across much of rural India, these powerful and deeply conservative local councils are the law of the land. They serve as judge and jury, dictating everything from custody cases to how women should dress to whether young lovers deserve to live or die.

They often enforce strict social norms about marriage and gender roles.

These unselected and unregulated courts are coming under fresh scrutiny after police say a council of elders in West Bengal ordered the gang rape of a 20-year-old woman as punishment for falling in love with the wrong man.

"We are going back to the 16th century," Pradip Bhattacharya, a politician in West Bengal, said as news of the gang rape began to spread in a country already reeling from a string of high-profile cases of sexual violence against women.

Village councils are common in India with vast rural communities, serving as the only practical means of delivering justice in areas where local governments are either too far away or too ineffective to mediate disputes. Often, the elders try to halt the march of the modern world, enforcing strict social norms about marriage and gender roles.

In some of the most extreme cases, the councils have sanctioned so-called honor killings, usually against women suspected of premarital sex. Known as *khat panchayats* in northern India, the councils act with impunity because villagers risk being ostracized if they flout the rulings.

The courts can be especially harsh toward women, enforcing the most conservative aspects of a patriarchal system that is deeply entrenched in Indian society.

India's Supreme Court has lashed out at the *khat*s, saying they amount to vigilante justice, are "wholly illegal" and should be stamped out. On Jan. 24, the Supreme Court took up the West Bengal case, ordering an investigation on a "suo moto" basis — meaning that the court acted on its own, without a request from either side in the case.

In many ways, the councils show how centuries of patriarchal traditions often clash with the values of a modern world in India. The growing numbers of financially independent young women who live on their own in cities would balk at even the most innocuous dictates by a village council, such as not wearing jeans or using cellphones.

The West Bengal case has revived long-standing criticisms of the *khat*s, with critics saying they are nothing more than kangaroo courts delivering medieval rulings.

According to police, at least 13 men attacked the woman in West Bengal — she lost count of exactly how many — on Jan. 20 after the elders in Subalpur village discovered her love affair with a Muslim man from a neighboring village.

The woman is a member of the Santhal tribe, and marrying a Muslim man from outside her community would be considered a violation of custom.

The men had visited Subalpur on Jan. 20 to propose marriage, but villagers caught him and tied the couple to a tree while the council decided their fate, according to local reports.

Police official C. Sudhakar said the village council ordered the man and woman to each pay a fine of 25,000 rupees (\$400). The man's family was able to pay, but when the woman's family said they were too poor, the council ordered the gang rape, police said.

The woman escaped the village two days later and contacted police.

Twelve suspects and the head of the council have been arrested. Four years ago, a nearby village council in West Bengal's

“The message is going round that you can do whatever you want and can go scot-free. As a result conservative forces are feeling emboldened.”

Jagmati Sangwan
general secretary of the All India
Democratic Women's Association



AP photos

Santhal tribal women gather in an Indian village where a 20-year-old woman was gang-raped, allegedly on the direction of a village council at Subalpur, on Jan. 24. Police say the council of elders in the eastern state of West Bengal ordered the rape as punishment for the woman falling in love with the wrong man.

Birbhum district ordered a young woman paraded naked through the village. She was accused of falling in love with a man from a different caste.

The area is 110 miles north of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal.

Nityananda Hembrom, the chief of West Bengal's 6 million Santhals, said the village council is being unfairly maligned, and that there are not enough details about the case.

"Maybe the girl was assaulted," he acknowledged. But he said the tribal community and lifestyle are under siege, and that he believes the council was acting against some sort of "cultural erosion."

Some observers say a general election, expected by May, has given the village elders even more power because politicians know local leaders dictate how their communities vote. India is the world's biggest democracy, with a population of 1.2 billion people.

Jagmati Sangwan, general secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association, said the village councils are so powerful because politicians court them for votes.

"The message is going round that you can do whatever you want and can go scot-free," she said. "As a result conservative forces are feeling emboldened."

Some of the most horrifying cases of local justice involve honor killings, often the culmination of a young couple's families and community.



Policemen inspect the site where the woman was gang-raped. Twelve suspects and the head of the council have been arrested.

Narendra Singh's brother and sister-in-law were slain in 2007 in an honor killing after the couple fled their village and secretly married. Singh filed a murder case accusing the girl's family of being behind the killing, enraging the village council.

After years of being shunned, Singh's life only recently has returned to normal.

"The council ruled that any villager found interacting with my family would be fined 25,000 rupees each," said Singh. "Only 8 to 10 villagers out of a total of 10,000 kept some sort of contact with us."

Awungshi, who has not seen her daughter even once, eight years after her ex-boyfriend's family abducted her, says she thinks of the girl every day and regrets that the village elders did not help her by remaining indifferent to her plea, thereby supporting the child's custody with her father.

She heard that her ex-boyfriend's family has given the girl a new name, Yarmi, which means "gift."

"She is 14 now," Awungshi said. "I hope and pray she will come back to me on her own one day when she becomes a mother herself."

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Economy likely stronger at end of '13

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy likely grew solidly in the final quarter of 2013, momentum that's expected to carry into this year. Most economists think 2014 will produce the strongest growth since the recession officially ended in June 2009.

On Thursday, the government was to make its first of three estimates of economic growth for the October-December quarter.

Economists are forecasting an annual growth rate of 3.3 percent, after an even stronger 4.1 percent rate for July through September.

For all of 2013, analysts think the economy grew about 1.9 percent. That would be below the 2.8 percent growth for 2012 as measured by the gross domestic product. GDP represents the country's total output of goods and services.

For all of 2014, analysts are more optimistic. Many fore-

see GDP growth of 3 percent or better.

A key reason for their optimism is an improved outlook for the government sector. Overall growth was reduced by an estimated 1.5 percentage points in 2013 because of a drag from higher federal taxes and deep government spending cuts. Those effects are expected to subside in 2014.

This year, economists also think the economy will get a lift

from continued gains in hiring. Further steady job growth would give more households money to spend and would help lift consumer spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of economic activity.

In addition, U.S. manufacturers are expected to get a lift from rising global demand.

At home, housing construction and auto sales, which showed strength last year, are expected to register further gains in 2014.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 31)	\$1.3959
Dollar buys (Jan. 31)	€0.7164
British pound (Jan. 31)	\$1.69
Japanese yen (Jan. 31)	¥101.00
South Korean won (Feb. 3)	₩1,044.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.6510/0.6557
Canada (dollar)	1.1176
China (Yuan)	6.0605
Denmark (Krone)	5.4962
Egypt (Pound)	0.9667
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.3581/3.7363
Hungary (Forint)	278.44
Israel (Shekel)	3.4912
Japan (Yen)	102.64
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2826
Norway (Krone)	6.2336
Philippines (Peso)	45.29
Poland (Zloty)	3.11
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2748
South Korea (Won)	1,080.26
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9011
Thailand (Baht)	32.98
Turkey (New Lira)	2.4332

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., rates provided for reference when buying currency with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.06
30-year bond	3.62

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.532	\$3.711	\$3.891	\$4.141
Change in price	-0.1 cents	-0.3 cents	-0.3 cents	+3.1 cents
Netherlands	--	\$4.659	\$4.950	\$5.004
Change in price	--	+3.5 cents	3.7 cents	+3.8 cents
U.K.	--	\$3.546	\$3.826	\$4.076
Change in price	--	-0.3 cents	-0.3 cents	+3.1 cents
Azores	--	--	\$4.482	--
Change in price	--	--	no change	no change
Turkey	--	\$3.876	\$4.287	\$4.287
Change in price	--	no change	no change	no change
Italy	--	--	\$4.445	\$4.009
Change in price	--	--	no change	+3.1 cents
Italy	\$3.936	--	--	\$4.271
Change in price	no change	--	--	no change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

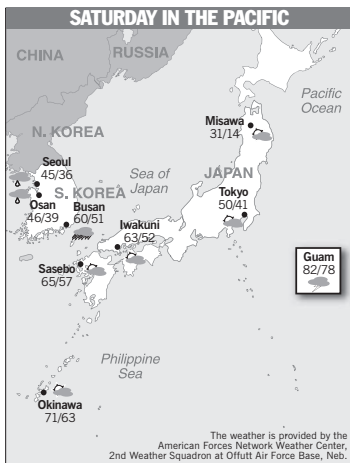
Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.469	--	\$3.899
Change in price	--	no change	--	+3.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.479	--	--	\$3.899
Change in price	no change	--	--	+3.0 cents
South Korea	\$3.546	\$4.159	\$4.159	--
Change in price	no change	no change	no change	+3.0 cents
Guam	\$3.539**	\$3.719	\$3.899	--
Change in price	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Feb. 1-7

MARKET WATCH

Jan. 29, 2014	
Dow Jones Industrials	-189.77
Nasdaq composite	-46.53
Standard & Poor's 500	1,774.20
Russell 2000	-15.78
	1,122.45

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Friday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Ablene, Tex	74	46	Pdly	Chatanooga	49	18	Clr	Fort Wayne	29	21	Snow	Louisville	40	28	Cl
Akron, Ohio	33	21	Snow	Cheyenne	25	14	Cl	Fresno	58	42	Cl	Lubbock	71	37	Pdly
Albany, N.Y.	35	16	Cl	Chicago	22	14	Cl	Grand Rapids	22	16	Snow	Macon	56	22	Cl
Albuquerque	56	40	Cl	Cincinnati	37	25	Cl	Green Bay	19	12	Snow	Madison	55	12	2
Allentown, Pa.	37	15	Cl	Cleveland	31	22	Snow	Greensboro, N.C.	24	19	Cl	Medford	48	31	Cl
Anchorage	50	27	Pdly	Colorado Springs	27	22	Cl	Hartford	30	17	Cl	Milwaukee	16	8	Cl
Asheville	54	18	Pdly	Columbia, S.C.	52	21	Cl	Harrisburg	48	28	Cl	Mpls-St Paul	82	67	Cl
Atlanta	52	26	Cl	Columbus, Ga.	33	24	Cl	Helena	30	15	Cl	Midland-Odessa	50	42	Pdly
Atlantic City	44	19	Cl	Concord, N.H.	78	57	Cl	Honolulu	89	68	Cl	Minneapolis	16	8	Cl
Austin	52	26	Cl	Corpus Christi	71	46	Pdly	Houston	74	55	Cl	Missoula	29	16	Cl
Baltimore	42	20	Cl	Dayton	33	25	Cl	Indianapolis	34	25	Cl	Mobile	89	68	Cl
Baton Rouge	66	40	Cl	Daytona Beach	70	52	Cl	Jacksonville	58	33	Cl	Montgomery	57	24	Cl
Bilings	26	7	Cl	Denver	29	19	Snow	Kansas City	29	21	Cl	Nashville	48	26	Cl
Birmingham	54	24	Cl	Des Moines	23	8	Cl	Key West	49	18	Cl	New Orleans	65	43	Cl
Bismarck	14	-12	Pdly	Detroit	30	22	Cl	Knoxville	49	18	Cl	New York City	38	24	Cl
Boise	37	24	Cl	El Paso	73	53	Cl	Laurens	59	46	Cl	Paducah	44	31	Cl
Boston	36	22	Cl	Elkins	37	11	Cl	Las Vegas	59	46	Cl	Pennsylvania	23	16	Cl
Bridgport	37	19	Cl	Erie	30	24	Snow	Lincoln	25	13	Cl	Phoenix	71	56	Cl
Brownsville	75	57	Cl	Eugene	45	35	Rain	Little Rock	55	36	Cl	Pittsburgh	35	24	Cl
Buffalo	33	22	Cl	Evansville	41	29	Cl	Los Angeles	67	50	Pdly				
Burlington, Vt.	38	18	Cl	Fairbanks	-15	-15	Cl								
Caribou, Maine	28	6	Cl	Fargo	-15	-15	Cl								
Charleston, S.C.	54	28	Pdly	Flagstaff	40	32	Snow								
Charleston, W.Va.	40	19	Cl	Flint	27	20	Cl								
Charlotte, N.C.	50	19	Cl	Fort Smith	57	36	Pdly								

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., '85, Saigon, Calif.
Lo: Wed., '26, Crane Lake, Minn.

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



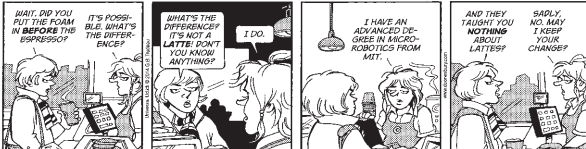
Candorville



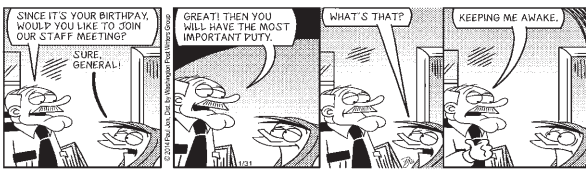
Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Ump
- 4 Asian nation
- 8 Brubeck of jazz
- 12 Ostrich's cousin
- 13 Chills and fever
- 14 Toolbar symbol
- 15 "Rocky Horror" dance
- 17 Neuter
- 18 Had night visions
- 19 Omega precursor
- 21 Witness
- 22 Computer use period
- 26 Compare
- 29 Firmament
- 30 Pop
- 31 Beelzebub's specialty
- 32 Old French coin
- 33 Sentence component

55 Illuminated

DOWN

- 1 Part of AARP accessories
- 2 Eastern potentate
- 3 Rant and rave
- 4 Sheriffs, e.g.
- 5 Marble type
- 6 "— American Cousin"
- 7 Samarai ritual suicide
- 8 Finger or toe
- 9 Expert
- 10 Encyc. spine abbr.
- 11 Conclusion
- 16 Art supporter?
- 20 Agent
- 23 Pedestal occupant
- 24 Crumbly deposit
- 25 Vortex
- 26 Toy brick name
- 27 Terrible guy?
- 28 What a spornan
- 29 Costa del —
- 32 Trademark for Mr. Rogers
- 33 Stately dance
- 35 Parisian pal
- 36 Fix a patchy lawn
- 38 Urge
- 39 Street urchin
- 42 Irritate
- 43 "The King —"
- 44 For fear that
- 45 Tease
- 46 Tokyo's old name
- 47 Right angle
- 49 Anger

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-31

CRYPTOQUIP

BZF PQLAFB TYXBNPFLX QLF
XN AFFC NC KYHVCU MLFCTZ
TZFFXF BZQB BZFH'EE

PQAF Q KLVF EVCF MNL VB.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE TAKING A LONG BATH, I RECKON YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO SET OFF THE SOAK DETECTOR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals L

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OPINION

Why Silicon Valley sticks up for Snowden

By PETER SWIRE

Is Edward Snowden a whistle-blower or a traitor? There is a vast cultural divide between Silicon Valley and Washington on this issue, and the reasons reveal much about the broader debates about what to do in the wake of his leaks.

In terms of my own perspective, I have written about privacy and the Internet for two decades, working closely with both civil liberties groups and Internet companies. On the government side, I first worked with intelligence agencies in the late 1990s when I chaired White House task forces on encryption and Internet wiretap laws.

As a member of President Barack Obama's Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies, I spoke with numerous people in the intelligence community. Not one said that Snowden was a whistle-blower. The level of anger was palpable.

Part of the anger arises from the daily routine of working with classified materials. Merely carrying a cellphone into a secure facility by mistake amounts to a security violation. Thousands of security officers enforce the rules, and people can and do get fired when they are not scrupulous with classified materials.

Intelligence officers see Snowden as a serial destroyer of classified secrets. He plotted for months to violate the law on a massive scale. He has tipped off foreign adversaries about numerous programs that will require countless hours of work to revise; many will not regain their previous effectiveness.

Even though Snowden rejected all the existing options for a whistle-blower — including congressional committees or avenues within the National Security Agency — the view from Silicon Valley and privacy groups is much different. Last fall, I

asked the leader of a Silicon Valley company about the whistle-blower-vs.-traitor debate. He said that more than 90 percent of his employees would call Snowden a whistle-blower.

Part of that reaction is based on the view that this robust national debate about NSA programs would not be happening had Snowden not leaked what he did.

The Silicon Valley concern about the NSA arises to some extent from a philosophy of anti-secrecy libertarianism. A well-known slogan there is that "information wants to be free."

The technology community's anger mounted when the media reported that the NSA had undermined at least one international encryption standard. The ability to export strong encryption was a hot-button issue in the 1990s, when the NSA argued that use of such encryption would enable terrorists and enemies to communicate in an "advanced persistent threat." A list of techies, privacy groups and Internet companies in 1999 persuaded the federal government to permit the export of strong encryption. Last year's media reports awoke dormant fears among techies that the NSA was creating a fundamentally insecure Internet.

The anger increased when the media reported that the NSA had tapped into the communications lines used by providers of the online "cloud." In response, Microsoft counsel Brad Smith wrote that "government snooping potentially now constitutes an 'advanced persistent threat.'" That is a term of art previously used primarily to describe cyberattacks by China. The major tech companies then bought full-page newspaper ads to express their serious concerns.

The gap between anger at Snowden and anger at the NSA shows the tension between the government and much of the

tech world. But which side is correct?

After wrestling with the issue, I think Snowden could have been a conscientious objector — but he has thus far failed the test. A central element of nonviolent dissent is to move society's conscience by taking personal responsibility. Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. went to jail for their beliefs, but Snowden ran away.

Going to jail is, of course, a lot to ask of a person. But Snowden knowingly set himself above the law, claiming a higher morality. Full clemency, without any jail time, would create a bad precedent in holding others in the intelligence community accountable, should they break security rules.

Snowden's fate aside, the culture clash holds lessons in how to blend the government and tech perspectives. The president has issued a directive that foreign policy, economic and privacy considerations must henceforth be included in sensitive decisions about intelligence collection. As shown by a new agreement between the Justice Department and technology companies, there will be greater transparency about government access to communications.

Fundamentally, the traitor-or-whistle-blower debate comes down to different views of what values should be paramount in governing the Internet we all use. The Internet is where surveillance happens to keep our nation safe. It is also where we engage in e-commerce and express ourselves in infinite ways. The goal is to create one communications structure that safeguards diverse, important values.

Peter Swire is a professor of law and ethics at the Georgia Institute of Technology's Scheller College of Business. He was a member of President Barack Obama's Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies and was the chief counselor for privacy in the Office of Management and Budget from 1999 to 2001. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Situational awareness set Obama's model goals

By DOYLE MCMANUS

Los Angeles Times

The rap against President Barack Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday was that his agenda, once ambitious and transformational, has suddenly turned modest.

Instead of big gains and sweeping change, the president proposed holding a summit meeting on working families and extracting a promise from colleges to admit more low-income students — not exactly sweeping solutions to middle-class stagnation and college debt.

We happened to meet the visionary politician who promised that his inauguration would mark the moment the rise of the oceans began to slow?

Simple: Reality has sunk in. In year six of Obama's presidency, modest proposals are the most appropriate offering. At the moment, the president has much to be modest about.

Any ability Obama might have had to navigate Washington's poisonous political culture to forge consensus on sweeping initiatives vanished when Republicans took over the House of Representatives in 2010.

The president's sway has ebbed even faster since his re-election in 2012, thanks to the chronic lack of success in his immigration program and the economy's stubborn failure to produce enough new jobs.

With Obama's job-approval rating stuck well below 50 percent, Republicans in Congress see plenty of reasons to oppose him but only danger in helping him.

Obama still has big goals, of course, which he listed in his speech: immigration reform, early childhood education, infra-

structure spending, raising the minimum wage, even the lack of gun control. But he listed all of those in his speech last year — and achieved none of them.

That's why the president's embrace of things he can do without Congress makes sense. Expect to see more executive orders, more White House summits and more private sector arm-twisting.

Obama's chief of staff, David Axelrod, deployed two phrases to dramatize this new strategy. The president "has a pen," he said, meaning the power to issue executive orders, and he "has a phone," meaning the ability to persuade corporate CEOs, college presidents and others to do what they want to do.

This will be "a year of action," Pfeiffer added — as opposed, presumably, to a year of stalled initiatives on Capitol Hill.

Obama offered insight into how he has accepted his newfound limits in an interview with the New Yorker's David Remnick.

"We cannot remake the world entirely during the little stretch that we have," the president said. "At the end of the day, we're part of a long-running story. We just try to get our paragraph right."

That doesn't mean he'll quit trying, and bipartisan legislation on one big issue might still be possible: immigration reform. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, has said he wants to try to pass a series of immigration bills this year, and Obama says he's willing to make a deal.

But expect downsized ambition to be the order of the day. Obama might still like to see a federal minimum wage of \$10.10 an hour. But because that seems unlikely to pass the Republican House, it looks as if he'll have to settle for the far more mod-

est change he announced Tuesday: raising the minimum wage by executive order to \$10.10 for federal contract workers.

That may be frustrating for a president who lamented in his speech that "corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher, and those at the top have never done better. But average wages have been held back. The middle class has deepened. Upward mobility has stalled."

"Our job is to reverse these trends," he declared.

But failing in that, as he seems likely to do, the president promised Tuesday to look for incremental ways to chip away at the gap between the rich and the rest.

And he will console himself with earlier victories. Already, at the White House, there's a sense that the main work of the Obama administration is mostly complete.

"If you look at the whole eight years ... the biggest and most important thing is our full back to work. The biggest economic disaster ... one of Obama's aides told me this week. "And then health care. Those are the biggest changes we will see if we look back 10 years from now."

"Immigration will fall into that category, if we get it," the aide added. Other priorities such as preschool education and job training programs aren't likely to grow beyond a few micro-initiatives.

Still, if Obama can make his health care program work, avoid new economic or international problems and help his party retain control of the Senate — no small tasks — he'll count 2014 as a success.

So yes, it's a modest decade. But gauged by what's doable in the second term of a presidency, it is also a realistic one.

Doyle McManus is a Los Angeles Times columnist.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

What Obama can accomplish Chicago Tribune

State of the Union addresses are about big ambitions, and Tuesday night's didn't disappoint. President Barack Obama's many priorities — job creation, middle-class earnings, infrastructure spending and all the others — are the unfinished business of a president aware (and no doubt uneasy) that, in three years, he belongs to history.

How many of those aspirations can he achieve? Of 24 proposals in last year's address, Washington Post fact-checkers rate five as accomplished, four as partially complete and 15 — notably gun control, immigration reform and a minimum wage increase — as dead letters. At first glance, this year's prognosis wouldn't be that upbeat. The Obamacare rollout soured many Americans on government-as-change-agent. Twikey members of Congress avoid all-vote in election years. And Obama's approval ratings have tumbled...

Tuesday night, Obama didn't dwell on his lost 2013. There was an oblique nod to his gridlock with Congress last year: "Let's make this a year of action." The subtext: He has to wonder whether, if his signature bills overhauled and passed, his presidency totals one year of managing through a financial crisis, followed by a biblical seven years of lean.

That's why his staffers have been broadcasting the message that Obama will try to circumvent Congress by marshaling his staff overhead. But success in both parties have done that although it's often a frustrating way to rule. Congress can thwart (or refuse to fund) executive orders that lack the force of law. Subsequent presidents can undo those orders as breezily as they were written.

Listening to Obama, though, we heard two takeaways that should be his realistic agenda before the acceleration of presidential campaigning in 2015 certifies his lame-duckery. The point isn't that he can get Congress to do his bidding; he cannot. On these two issues, though, he can help Republicans and Democrats realize that it's in their best interests to do as he asks.

That's a spectacularly accurate if too limited prediction of all that a reform to federal taxes and transfer programs could do before his presidency began. Obama was saying the right things about the unsustainable of entitlement benefits; in budget wrangles with Republicans he has agreed to Medicare reforms.

Imagine the potential power of a president who'll never run again gathering his economic priorities, expanding the budget. A path to debt reduction, encouragement to hire more workers, elimination of tax deductions and credits that tend to benefit the wealthy, incentives to drive new growth. In one afternoon, Obama's policy team could draft an omnibus plan for financial operations, expanding the nation's workforce and assuring that today's benefits will exist for tomorrow's retirees. Stable and lower tax rates, paid for by scaling back those runaway deductions and credits, would benefit individuals and employers alike.

Obama's presidency, efforts at a "Go Big" finance deal always have flopped. Now, as a second-term with goals he wants to accomplish, he's liberated. He can bundle his proposals in bows appealing to both parties. Granted, with Obama inclined to govern by executive order rather than just with Congress, that wouldn't be easy. But it could be done. Democrats

and Republicans proved that with their tax mega package late in Ronald Reagan's presidency.

Immigration reform, coupled with a rescue of federal finances and entitlement programs? Good for Obama, good for the historians who'll grade him — and good for the future of America.

Get rid of fishy descriptions

The Kansas City (Mo.) Star

Your dinner has arrived, a nice piece of fish, delicately cooked, served perhaps over a bed of rice or, wow, maybe quinoa. Was it wild salmon you ordered? Would you be surprised and disappointed to learn that you got coho instead?

As the nonprofit organization Oceana has put it: "Recent studies have found that seafood may be mislabeled as often as 25 to 70 percent of the time for fish like red snapper, wild salmon, and Atlantic cod, disguising species that are less desirable, cheaper or more readily available."

Seafood fraud has been documented in recent years by newspapers, Consumer Reports and others. Now two senators want Obama administration to do something about it.

Sen. Edward Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, and Roger Wicker, a Mississippi Republican, recently wrote to President Barack Obama urging action on seafood fraud.

"Consumer fraud is ripping off consumers," they wrote, "posing health risks by disguising species that may be harmful for sensitive groups, and harming our oceans by making it easier for illegally caught product to make its way into the U.S. market."

A big part of the problem, according to a 2009 report by the U.S. Environmental Accounting Office, involves a lack of coordination and communication by three agencies most responsible for seafood inspections: the Food and Drug Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Customs and Border Protection. The report also noted the confusion and inefficiencies to note that the Department of Agriculture has jurisdiction over catfish.

Upward of 90 percent of all seafood consumed domestically is imported, the senators noted, but the FDA inspects less than 2 percent of those products.

In 2011 Oceana conducted a study of seafood in the Los Angeles market — fish sold at grocery stores and restaurants, including sushi purveyors — and reported that 55 of all samples it collected were mislabeled, and every fish sold with the word "snapper" in the label, 34 out of 34, was misidentified and out of whack with FDA guidelines.

Markey and Wicker say they will work toward solutions in Congress, but expressed hope that Obama's agencies would do a better job of working together on the fraud.

Fish consumers deserve accurate descriptions of what's on their plates.

Karzai makes progress harder

The New York Times

President Hamid Karzai, of Afghanistan, seems to have decided that there is nothing lost, and maybe something to be gained, in destroying his relationship with the United States. While such behavior may serve his interests, it does not serve that of his long-suffering country.

An image of a funeral in Afghanistan that the government tied to a recent American airstrike actually took place in 2009.

Karzai has long been at odds with the United States. In the last week, his government distributed an inflammatory, falsified dossier, including graphic photographs, to try to document accusations that the American-led NATO coalition had caused great carnage, including civilian deaths, when it conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan on Jan. 15. The Times found that much of the same material had been posted on a Taliban website and that at least



MASSOUD HOSSAIN/AP

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said he will not sign a security pact with the U.S. unless Washington and Pakistan launch a peace process with Taliban insurgents.

two of the photos were more than 3 years old. No one disputes that civilians died in the attack, which hit Wazhgar, a village in a valley with Taliban fighters, but coalition and Afghan officials differ on the death toll. The coalition says two children were killed when two compounds producing the heaviest Taliban fire were destroyed; the Afghans say 12 to 17 civilians were killed.

Karzai — like most citizens of his country — is fed up with airstrikes and especially civilian deaths, an understandable frustration after a dozen war-torn years. But, according to the United Nations, most civilians are killed by the Taliban. Instead of dealing with the issue honestly, Karzai is increasingly using it to demonize the U.S. Over American protests, he is said to be pushing forward with plans to release 37 detainees, who are regarded by the coalition as dangerous insurgents. He has refused to sign a security agreement that would allow some residual American troops to remain after the bulk of the forces withdraw by the end of this year.

Some Afghans have pushed back against Karzai's conspiracies and destructive ways, but not enough. The candidates running to succeed him owe voters a vision of how they will improve governance and work more productively with the United States and its allies, who have spent billions of dollars to underwrite Afghanistan's economy and will be asked to do more in the years to come.

Try new approach to free Bae

The Seattle Times

American prisoner Kenneth Bae wants the U.S. government to help get him out of North Korea. The former Lynnwood resident issued his plea recently in a news conference, the first time authorities there have let him speak to reporters.

The United States has tried and should keep trying. The State Department's special envoy for human rights issues, Ambassador Robert King, was invited to Pyongyang last August to negotiate for Bae's freedom. The regime rescinded its offer at the last minute.

Under heavy guard and wearing a gray uniform with the number 103 on his chest, Bae apologized for his crimes. He also revealed he might soon be returned to prison after months of treatment in a hospital for various ailments.

The 45-year-old tour operator's nightmare began in November 2012 while he was escorting five Europeans into North Korea. Bae was detained, then sentenced to 15 years in a labor camp for "hostile acts" against the government.

Speaking on CNN this month, Bae's mother and sister from Washington state

expressed fears that anything they say about this latest prison video may be misinterpreted by the North Koreans. They echoed Bae's apology and said they are worried about his health. His wife and three kids need him home.

For months, U.S. officials maintain they've worked with the Swedish Embassy in Pyongyang to request amnesty for Bae on humanitarian grounds. An offer to send an envoy still stands.

The U.S. government should also consider what's worked in the past, too. On separate occasions, former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton traveled to North Korea to bring home American prisoners. Last month, Merrill Newman, an 85-year-old Korean War veteran and tourist, was released after he confessed (under duress) to crimes committed during his time serving in the U.S. military.

The North Koreans could show the same mercy to Kenneth Bae, but they may need a stronger nudge from Washington, D.C.

Many should pay restitution

Los Angeles Times

When she was 8 years old, a Pennsylvania girl identified only as Amy was raped repeatedly by an uncle, who compounded the crime by photographing the encounters — some of which involved acts ordered up by consumers of child pornography — and sending the images out over the Internet. More than 70,000 copies have been found on various confiscated computers.

The uncle went to prison in 1998 and was ordered to pay \$6,325 in restitution to cover Amy's psychological treatment at the time, which helped her heal from the trauma that began in 2007. Amy learned that the photographs remained in wide distribution, a revelation that she argues — quite reasonably — caused further emotional damage, affecting her ability to attend college and to work. It's impossible to imagine her anguish at knowing those images are still out there in 2014. To account for that restitution, including lifetime therapy, will cost \$3.4 million.

Who should be responsible for paying that restitution lies at the heart of a case argued last week before the Supreme Court, a case that raises significant questions about criminal culpability and collective guilt.

A Texan named Doyle Paroline added two Amy photos to his large collection of illicit material in 2008 and, after he was caught the next year, pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography. He was sentenced to two years in prison; Amy then filed papers seeking restitution, one of some 250 filings across the country that have led to nearly \$1.8 million in restitution orders.

A Texas district court ruled against Amy in the Paroline case, but an appeals court reversed that and then went further, ruling that Paroline should make full restitution — that he should pay the entire \$3.4 million — because, as part of the uncountable audience of people who have viewed the photos, he is "equally and severally" responsible for the harm and letting the court be up to Paroline to decide whether he wanted to go after his fellow offenders for their share.

This is where a bad situation gets murky. Clearly the uncle, as the creator and distributor of the photographs, bears the most responsibility for the harm and letting the illicit photographs make Paroline liable for all the damage Amy has suffered?

That is a reach. Paroline's behavior is indefensible, and he could well owe Amy some portion of the restitution. There also is something to be said for giving the victim a voice in the harm and letting the criminals fight among themselves. But picking one porn viewer out of that vast array to bear the full cost is unreasonable.

Sometimes, justice requires being fair even to those who don't deserve it. And justice in this case means rejecting the argument that Paroline must pay for all his fellow criminals.

SPORTS

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball **OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER** — Suspended Philadelphia LHP Christopher Lowney (Lakewood, Colo., 6-1, 25) for a second positive test for a drug of abuse under the Minor League Drug Prevention and Treatment Program.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Acquired OF Carlos Peguero from Seattle for a player to be named or cash considerations. Designated LHP Everett Teaford for assignment to Triple-A.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Agreed to terms with RHP Matt Guerrier on a minor league contract.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with RHP Bruce Billings, INF Austin Chisholm, RHP Bobby Chisholm, RHP Brandon Guyer, RHP Scott Lincecum, INF Yanervis Solarte and INF Zolus Wheeler on minor league contracts.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Scott Baker on a minor league contract.

TEXAS RANGERS — Claimed LHP Pedro Fajaron off waivers from Tampa Bay. Designated RHP Chaz Roe for assignment to Triple-A.

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
CINCINNATI REDS — Agreed to terms with INF Ryan Hamilton on a minor league contract.

NEW ENGLAND CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with INF Daniel Descalso on a one-year contract.

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS — Signed F/Center Karasev to Canton (NBAOL).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Signed C/OF Cole Aldinger, OF Toney Murray and F Jeremy Toney to Erie.

FOOTBALL
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Signed K Danny Hupman to a reserve/figure contract.

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Named Steve Bock as defensive coach and Brian Pariani tight ends coach.

BUFFALO BILLS — Named Jim Hostler special offensive assistant.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Named Brendan Daly defensive assistant coach. **MINNAPOLIS** — Agreed to terms with general manager Brian Grann and the team have mutually parted ways.

ST. LOUIS RANGERS — Named Ethan Casson chief revenue officer.

CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
TORONTO ARGONAUTS — Signed QB Zachary Sigafoos.

WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS — Acquired DE Matt Mackay from Hamilton for rights to RW Giovanni Aprile.

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
ANAHIMUS — Agreed to terms with D Mark Fistrick on a three-year contract extension.

FLORIDA STARS — Signed F Ryan Garza to a three-year contract extension.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN — Named Doug Williams head coach. Williams has been the team's offensive coordinator since the start of the 2014-15 season.

WINNIPEG JETS — Assigned D Paul Smith to St. John's AHL on a tryout.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer
LA GALAXY — Formed LA Galaxy to its competition in USL PRO.

NEW YORK RED BULLS — Re-signed D Jason Odeh.

PHILADELPHIA UNIONS — Announced the hiring of coach Brian Burke.

COLLEGE
FLORIDA — Announced men's freshman basketball F Chris Walker to be replaced by player to be named.

FRESNO STATE — Named Lou Major football coach.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN — Named Doug Williams head coach. Williams has been the team's offensive coordinator since the start of the 2014-15 season.

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SPORT BRIEFS/OLYMPICS



KAMRAN JEBREILI/AP

Rory McIlroy shot a 63 on Thursday to lead after the first round of the Dubai Desert Classic.

Briefly

Doctors trying to bring Schumacher out of coma

The Associated Press

LONDON — Michael Schumacher's doctors have started trying to wake up the Formula One great from the medically induced coma he's been in since a skiing accident last month, his manager said Thursday.

The 45-year-old Schumacher suffered serious head injuries when he fell and hit the right side of his head on a rock in the French resort of Meribel on Dec. 29. The seven-time F1 champion has been in an induced coma in Grenoble University Hospital since then, although his condition stabilized following surgery after initially being described as critical.

"Michael's sedation is being reduced in order to allow the start of the waking up process which may take a long time," Schumacher's manager, Sabine Kehm, said in a statement. Schumacher was being kept artificially sedated and his body temperature was lowered to between 93.2 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit, to reduce swelling in the brain, reduce its energy consumption and allow it to rest.

Kehm said she was only providing an update now on Schumacher's condition to clarify media leaks, and that no further details would be provided.

Schumacher retired from For-

mula One in 2012 after garnering an unmatched seven world titles. His accident happened on a family vacation in the Alps as Schumacher was skiing with his 14-year-old son.

McIlroy shoots 63 to lead in Dubai

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Rory McIlroy took another step toward regaining his form Thursday with his lowest score in more than three years, a 9-under 63 while playing with Tiger Woods to take a two-shot lead in the Dubai Desert Classic.

McIlroy played bogey-free in ideal scoring conditions on the Maglis course at Emirates Golf Club, picking up six birdies and an eagle during a 10-hole stretch in the middle of his round. He easily upstaged Woods, who was five shots behind after a 68.

Edoardo Molinari made an eagle on the par-4 second hole on his way to a 65.

Ginobili out 3-4 weeks with strained hamstring

Those 36-year-old legs of Manu Ginobili's have been feeling pretty spry this season. That spring in his step that had been missing for

so much of last season was back, helping the Argentine magician become a game-changer again for the San Antonio Spurs.

So when the lane opened up in the third quarter Tuesday night against the Houston Rockets, Ginobili decided to go for it. He rose up, cradled the ball in his left hand and threw down a solid, one-handed dunk. And with that, Ginobili joined the growing list of injured Spurs.

The team said Wednesday that Ginobili strained his left hamstring on the dunk and will miss the next three to four weeks.

Ginobili joins Danny Green (broken finger), Kawhi Leonard (broken left hand) and Tiago Splitter (sprained right shoulder) on the team's injured list, a run of bad luck that has torn apart the team's depth, particularly on the wing.

Six-time All-Star Berkman retires at 37

HOUSTON — Six-time All-Star Lance Berkman is retiring after 15 seasons in the major leagues.

Berkman, 37, almost left the game last offseason before signing with the Texas Rangers. He then had another injury-plagued season and was limited to 73 games.

Zimbabwe sends first Winter Olympian ever

By ANGUS SHAW
The Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Zimbabwe has seen a sprinkling of snow only once, and it wasn't even in Luke Steyn's lifetime.

Doesn't matter one bit. The 20-year-old Steyn will still be the southern African country's first Winter Olympics athlete when he races in the slalom and giant slalom at the 2014 Games in Sochi — the final stage of a journey from his sweltering, snowless country of birth to the University of Colorado and beyond.

"He might not get a gold, but there's plenty of time," Kevin Atkinson, the head of the Zimbabwe Snow Sports Association, told The Associated Press. "It's great experience and a fantastic achievement to represent our country at the Winter Games."

Alongside Steyn's personal story, it's also remarkable that Zimbabwe has a snow sports organization. Snow has fallen in the country once, records indicate, more than 50 years ago when a freak light dusting settled in a central region in 1960.

But since Jamaica's bobsled team turned up at the 1988 Calgary Games with borrowed sleds and a dream, the Winter Olympics has become reachable for athletes from all sorts of countries — snow or not.

In Africa, Togo and Morocco also have athletes who have qualified for Sochi this year, while

South Africa could have sent a slalom skier, too, but decided to turn his place down. The Cayman Islands, the Virgin Islands and tropical Tonga in the south Pacific will also send competitors to Sochi.

Of course, Steyn needed snow and therefore other countries to make his winter dream happen after first taking up skiing on family vacations in Europe. He perfected his art while studying in the United States, on trips to New Zealand and Chile, and then through-out Europe in a bid to qualify.

Backed by Zimbabwe's recently formed snow sports group and the national sports council, he drove about 1,800 miles through France, Italy and Switzerland in 20 days to gather enough points in his events to make the grade for Sochi before the Jan. 19 cutoff for qualifying.

There were also weather problems in Europe, where poor snowfalls affected his schedule almost every day. Once again, Steyn was left chasing the snow.

In a troubled nation that has an estimated 3 million people living abroad as economic or political fugitives, Steyn also has the backing of the Zimbabwe Olympic Committee and the state-run Sports and Recreation Council to wear Zimbabwe's colors on the Sochi snow.

"This is a first for us. We are fully behind the athlete who will lift the country's flag there," ZOC chief executive Anna Mguni said.

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OLYMPICS

Pushing the envelope

Snowboarder White goes for more gold in slopestyle and halfpipe at Sochi Games

By EDDIE PELLIS
The Associated Press

The question hovers over Shaun White — not so much the way a black cloud might linger but more like a whiff of smoke he casually can bat away.

What if he's not good enough?

Instead of avoiding those sort of conundrums, the world's best snowboarder pursues them.

■ On the halfpipe, where he spent the better part of a year trying a trick he couldn't master but nonetheless emerged a favorite for a third straight Olympic gold.

■ On the slopestyle course, where he eagerly took up the challenge presented by the Olympic overlords, who gave him a chance to win two gold medals in Sochi.

■ Even on the concert stage — with a guitar in his hand — where White and his band will soon tour the country to promote their newly released album.

Much as they watch him do tricks on the mountain, fans will come to listen to the superstar play and see if he can make it as a rocker. Part of the thrill is knowing there's at least a chance that he cannot.

"I like it. I like the fact that these things are there," the 27-year-old action sports icon said.

White heads to Sochi as arguably the most famous athlete competing. "It's going to push me to do things I never would've done before," he said.

White concedes there's more at stake this time — that he's had to grow up since the last time he hit the grand stage, in Vancouver four years ago.

Back then, he had the gold medal wrapped up with one run left — the so-called victory lap that meant nothing. White used it to stomp his biggest trick, the Double McTwist 1260. It was one of the most electric moments of the Olympics: Totally unnecessary as far as the scoreboard went. But a necessity as far as he was concerned.

"I've got to imagine he did it for himself, for everyone else, for the sport," said Jake Burton, the godfather of snowboarding and one of White's mentors. "He's got very high expectations for himself. I think the progression of the sport is one of the things he expects of himself."

Along those lines, White spent several months, starting in the spring of 2012, trying a triple cork — three head-over-heels flips. Nobody had ever done it in a halfpipe — White couldn't either.

Yet he didn't recoil from releasing an unflinching portrayal of that setback in a self-produced documentary — a story that ends with a success: White's co-opting, then improving upon, a 1440-degree spinning jump that one of his key rivals, Iouri Podladtchikov, pulls off first. Podladtchikov, aka the "I-Pod," named it the "Yolo."

White's longtime coach, Bud Keene, describes the very calculating process the Olympic champion uses when he decides which tricks he'll focus on.

"He looks at the world standard, extrapolates it into the future based on how far the competition can push until game time, then adds 50 percent to that level," Keene said. "Basically, his formula for the Olympics is to show up 1½ times better a rider as his nearest competition. That way, if he has a bad day and they have a good day, he can still win."

It's an even tougher hill to climb in slopestyle, a trick-filled trip down the mountain that White more or less left behind for a half-dozen years to focus on the halfpipe.

When the International Olympic Committee added it to the program, presenting White a chance to win two golds, he never hesitated to throw his board into the ring. He did it knowing he'd be one of only a handful of riders who will try both disciplines — and did it knowing there are dozens of competitors who have been focusing on slopestyle exclusively while White's time has been divided.

"All these competitors in slopestyle, they haven't really had to deal with me," he said. "I'm hoping I can surprise them a little bit. Show them something new."

It's always something new with him. Clothing lines. Snowboard gear. Mountain bikes. Gum flavors.

Put them all together, and it's no wonder White has a 63 percent awareness among the general population, according to a survey by the global marketing research firm, Repucom. Seventy-four percent of people aware of White identify him as a trendsetter and 81 percent say he is influential in today's society. It helps explain how White can move the needle with something as mundane as, say, a haircut.

These days, he sports a sleeked-back look that's more suited to the red carpet than the slopes and bears little resemblance to the unkempt, tomato-red locks that were once his trademark. He donated his hair to Locks of Love, which serves financially disadvantaged kids who lose their hair for medical reasons.

"I didn't get the magnitude of this decision until afterward, but I didn't really ask anyone," he said. "I just did it. It was something I wanted to do. I felt like it was a weight lifted. I felt like it was time. One of the best decisions I've ever made."

The two-month leadup to the Olympics has been grueling — filled with at least one significant injury (left ankle) and one big crash (in Mammoth, Calif.).

He skipped the Winter X Games, where he would have gotten the best look at his main competition — and they could've seen him.

Instead, he trained privately, his eye fixed squarely on Sochi and the goal ahead: Two gold medals.

Improbable, some might say, but a challenge the world's best snowboarder wouldn't shy away from.

"I've never really lowered my sights from that," White said. "It's driven me this far. At any competition, it's a risk you take that you might not win it, that someone might be better than you. But when you get into this, you know you're putting yourself up for that from the very beginning."

Shaun White is back for his third Olympics, having already won gold in 2006 and 2010 in the halfpipe. This time, though, White also tackles the discipline of slopestyle, hoping to win two gold medals in Sochi.

ANDREW P. SCOTT, DALLAS MORNING NEWS/KRT

sochi
2014



NHL/NBA

NHL roundup

Scrivens' record 59 saves lift Edmonton

The Associated Press

EDMONTON — When Edmonton traded for goalie Ben Scrivens on Jan. 15, they hoped he would help bring some consistency to the position.

The Oilers never expected a performance like the one he gave Wednesday night.

Scrivens stopped 59 shots, an NHL regular-season record for saves in a shutout, leading the Oilers to a 3-0 victory over the San Jose Sharks.

"Hats off to the goaltender, he was tremendous," said San Jose coach Todd McLellan. "Heck of a performance. In all my years in the league I don't think I've seen that. We attempted 100 shots on goal, that doesn't happen very often."

Scrivens topped the previous mark set by Phoenix's Mike Smith, who stopped 54 shots in a 2-0 victory over Columbus on April 3, 2012.

Scrivens stopped 20 shots in the first, 22 in the second and 17 in the third.

Justin Schultz, Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall scored for Edmonton.

Rangers 2, Islanders 1: Daniel Carrillo scored the tiebreaking goal 4:36 into the third period, and the Rangers completed a two-game sweep of the outdoor series against the Islanders at frigid Yankee Stadium.

Building off their 7-3 win over New Jersey at the ballpark in the Bronx on Sunday, the Rangers took another division rivalry under the lights in front of 50,027 fans. The temperature was 22 degrees when the first puck dropped at 7:45 p.m. with a single-digit wind-chill factor.

Benoit Pouliot also scored for the Rangers, who are 3-0 in their history while playing outside. Henrik Lundqvist stopped 30 shots while again adorning pin-striped pads in honor of the Yankees. The only goal he allowed was a late second-period tally to Brock Boesl.

Blackhawks 5, Canucks 2: Jonathan Toews, Patrick Sharp and Brandon Saad each had a goal and an assist in the second period as visiting Chicago beat Vancouver.

Marian Hossa also scored in the second period for Chicago and Saad added an empty-netter late. Carey Crawford made 29 saves.

Chicago scored four times on five shots in a span of 7:31 in the second to rally from two goals down and snap a four-game winless streak (0-2-2).

The victory was Blackhawks coach Joel Quenneville's 693rd, moving him past Dick Irvin into second place of third place on the career coaching wins list.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Boston	52	34	15	3	71	159 115
Tampa Bay	53	31	17	5	67	157 131
Toronto	55	28	21	6	62	158 170
Montreal	53	28	20	5	61	131 134
Detroit	53	23	19	11	57	125 149
Ottawa	53	23	20	10	56	150 167
Florida	53	21	25	7	49	129 164
Buffalo	52	14	30	8	36	101 152
Metropolitan Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Pittsburgh	53	17	14	2	76	171 128
N.Y. Rangers	55	29	23	3	61	141 139
Philadelphia	54	26	22	6	58	147 158
Carolina	53	24	20	9	57	134 150
Columbus	53	26	23	4	56	154 151
Washington	53	21	21	8	55	153 158
New Jersey	54	22	21	11	55	127 135
N.Y. Islanders	56	21	27	8	50	158 167

Western Conference

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Chicago	56	33	10	13	79	199	156
St. Louis	52	36	11	5	77	180	119
Colorado	52	33	14	5	71	153	137
Minnesota	55	29	20	6	64	133	135
Dallas	53	24	21	8	56	154	157
Nashville	55	24	23	8	56	136	166
Winnipeg	55	25	25	5	55	155	162
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	55	39	11	5	83	184	134
San Jose	54	34	14	6	74	165	129
Los Angeles	55	30	19	6	66	133	143
Vancouver	55	27	19	9	63	139	143
Phoenix	53	25	18	10	60	154	160
Calgary	53	19	27	7	45	124	169
Edmonton	56	18	32	6	42	147	190

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Sunday's games

Boston 6, Florida 2
Toronto 3, Tampa Bay 2
Philadelphia 5, Detroit 0
Ottawa 3, Columbus 2
Washington 5, Buffalo 4, OT
Montreal 3, Carolina 0
Los Angeles 4, Jersey 0
Nashville 4, Winnipeg 3
Phoenix 3, Los Angeles 0
Calgary 5, Chicago 4, OT
Minnesota 4, Anaheim 2

Wednesday's games

N.Y. Rangers 2, N.Y. Islanders 1
Edmonton 3, San Jose 6
Chicago 5, Vancouver 2

Thursday's games

Montreal at Boston
Florida at Toronto
Washington at Columbus
Tampa Bay at Ottawa
New Jersey at Dallas
Minnesota at Colorado
San Jose at Calgary
Buffalo at Phoenix
Philadelphia at Anaheim
Pittsburgh at Los Angeles

Friday's games

N.Y. Islanders at N.Y. Rangers
St. Louis at Carolina
Detroit 3, Chicago 2 (pp.)
New Jersey at Nashville
Vancouver at Winnipeg

Wednesday

Rangers 2, Islanders 1

N.Y. Rangers 2, Islanders 1
1-2
N.Y. Islanders 1-1
Second Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Nelson 10 (Donovan, Clutterbuck), 18:33. 2, N.Y. Rangers, Pouliot 9 (Brassard, Zuccarello), 19:13.

Third Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, Carrillo 3 (D. Moore, Eberle), 4:36.

Shots on Goal—N.Y. Islanders 6-14-14—34. N.Y. Islanders 10-15-6-31.

Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Rangers 9 of 12, N.Y. Islanders 0 of 4.

Goals—N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 19-18:33 (pp.), 19:13 (pp.), N.Y. Islanders, Nabokov 9-9:5 (34:32).

Penalties—N.Y. Islanders, 7-2:31. A—50,027 (50,291). T—2:31.

Blackhawks 5, Canucks 2

Chicago 5, Canucks 2
0-4
1-5
N.Y. Islanders 1-1
First Period—1, Vancouver, Higgins 15 (Kestler, Eller), 1:16.

Second Period—2, Vancouver, Sestito 5 (Stanton, Kassian), 2:44. 3, Chicago, Hossa 22 (Versteeg), 12:39 (pp.).

Goals—Chicago, Saad 16 (Brookbank, Handzus), 8:39. 5, Chicago, Toews 18 (Steenbrook, Sharp), 10:47. 6, Chicago, Sharp 28 (Toews, Keith), 14:11.

Shots on Goal—Chicago, Saad 17 (Hossa), 19:22 (pp.).

Penalties—Chicago, 13-17-10-40. Vancouver 7-13-11-31.

Power-play opportunities—Chicago 2 of 4, Vancouver 0 of 3.

Goals—Chicago, Crawford 20-8:9 (13 shots-29 saves). Vancouver, Luongo 19-13-6 (39-35).

A—18,910 (18,910). T—2:30.

Oilers 3, Sharks 0

San Jose 0, Oilers 3
0-0
0-3
Edmonton 1-1
First Period—1, Edmonton, JSchultz 7 (N. Hall, Hall), 10:51.

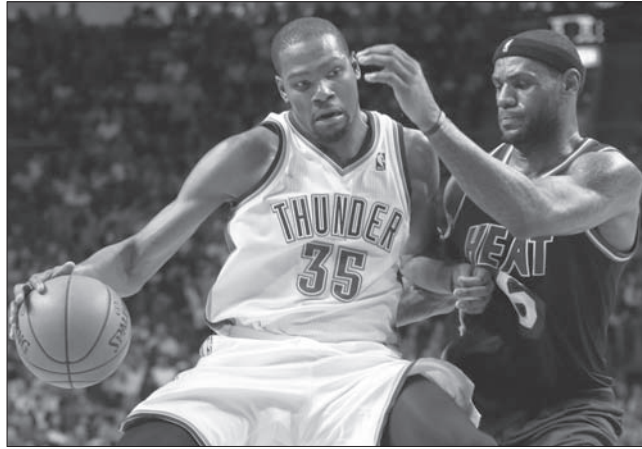
Second Period—1, Edmonton, Hall 19 (Eberle, Nugent-Hopkins), 6:10. 3, Edmonton, Eberle 19 (Nugent-Hopkins, Hall), 18:40 (pp.).

Shots on Goal—San Jose 20-22-17-57. Edmonton 7-9-11-27.

Power-play opportunities—San Jose 0 of 3, Edmonton 1 of 2.

Goals—San Jose, Niemi 27-11:6 (7 shots-29 saves). Edmonton, Scrivens 9-7-4 (59-59).

A—16,839 (16,839). T—2:33.



ALAN DIAZ/AP

Heat forward LeBron James puts pressure on Thunder forward Kevin Durant during the fourth quarter on Wednesday in Miami. The Thunder rallied from an 18-point deficit to win 112-85.

Thunder dig a deep hole, but then race past Heat

By TIM REYNOLDS

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Down by 18 points midway through the opening quarter, Kevin Durant and the Oklahoma City Thunder looked well on their way to witnessing a rout.

That's exactly what happened.

And they enjoyed every moment.

Durant remained sizzling with 33 points, Serge Ibaka added 22 and the Thunder roared back from an abysmal start — they trailed 22-4 early — to embarrass the Miami Heat 112-85 on Wednesday night, erasing that big deficit out of the gate by outscoring the two-time defending champions by 43 points over a 33-minute span.

"They were ready for us to come in and play," Durant said. "They hit some tough shots early on, a few three's, and we didn't panic. We just tried to stay together and that's what we did. Our bench was great in getting us back in that game."

The Thunder led by as many as 25, and shot 16-for-27 from three-point range. Miami was 3-for-19 from beyond the arc.

Durant has now scored at least 30 points in 12 straight games, matching the league's longest such streak since Tracy McGrady did it in 14 consecutive outings in the 2002-03 season. The Thunder extended their winning streak to nine, inching them closer to Indiana in the race for the league's best record. And the Oklahoma City bench outscored Miami's reserves 39-21, with Jeremy Lamb scoring 18 and Derek Fisher going 5-for-5 from three-point range for his 15 points.

"There's no running away from it," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "Other than the first eight minutes of the game they outlasted us tonight. They absolutely deserved this win."

LeBron James scored 34 points for Miami, his 1-on-1 duel with Durant not really amounting to much on a night where the Heat allowed 25 points off turnovers and blew an 18-point lead for just the fourth time since he, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh became teammates nearly four years ago.

Bosh scored 18 points and Wade added 15 for Miami.

"We played well to start the game," James said.

"We played well all the way until like the second quarter. From that point on they did what they want to do."

Much of the buzz going into the night was about the MVP race, and how this might be the season that Durant finally catches James for the league's top individual award.

Head-to-head, they weren't separated by much. But for just the fourth time in 17 meetings between their teams, Durant came out on top.

"It would have been fun to clear the court and watch them go 1-on-1," Thunder coach Scott Brooks said.

Ibaka opened the scoring with a jumper, and the Heat answered with an immediate 18-0 run, not even needing 5 minutes to get what appeared to be complete control. With 6:20 left in the opening quarter, Bosh made a pair of free throws to make it 22-4.

That pretty much ended the Heat highlights for the evening.

By the end of the first, the Thunder were within nine. Lamb scored 13 in the second quarter alone, helping Oklahoma City take a 55-50 lead into the break, with the Thunder already having scored 19 points off turnovers.

The third quarter, Durant and the Thunder put it away.

Durant and James seemed to be playing a little game of "Can you top this?" in that period, both finishing with 12 points in the 12 minutes. The difference was, Durant was getting plenty of help, and James wasn't getting much.

"Rucker Park, that's what was going through my head," Durant said, referring to the New York basketball landmark where he scored 66 points in a game during the summer of 2011. "It was fun. ... I'm sure the fans got what they wanted to see with that one."

Said James: "It's fun competition. It's been a while since I was able to do something like that."

Fisher connected on a three-pointer to end the quarter, pushing Oklahoma City's margin to 16, and the Heat had no answers in the fourth.

"We have some work to do," Spoelstra said. "We're like everybody else in the league. Nobody is infallible. We have some things to improve on. We know the things we have to improve on. We're not there yet."

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Roundup

Kansas wins 7th straight

The Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Andrew Wiggins scored a career-high 29 points, including six straight late in the game, to lead No. 6 Kansas to a 92-81 victory over No. 16 Iowa on Wednesday night.

Wiggins had 27 points in Saturday's victory at TCU, and matched that with an emphatic dunk that gave Kansas an 81-72 lead with just under 3 minutes remaining in Wednesday's game.

The Jayhawks (16-4, 7-0 Big 12) put away the Cyclones (15-4, 3-4) from there for their seventh consecutive victory.

Perry Ellis added 20 for Kansas. Joel Embiid added 14 points and 11 rebounds, while Naadir Tharpe had 12 points and 12 assists.

Georges Niang led the Cyclones with 24 points.

Iowa State won its first 14 games, but has dropped four of its past five.

Northwestern 65, No. 14 Wisconsin 56: Drew Crawford scored a season-high 30 points and JerShon Cobb added his 10 in the second half to give the Wildcats (11-11, 4-5 Big Ten) their first victory over the Badgers (17-4, 4-4) in Madison, Wis., since 1996.

Ben Brust's 21 points led Wisconsin, which lost for the fourth time in five games.

No. 19 Saint Louis 77, Richmond 57: At St. Louis, Jordan Jeff had 21 points and a career-best 10 rebounds for the Billikens (19-2, 6-0 Atlantic 10), who led by 24 points in the first half.

Kendall Anthony scored 14 for Richmond (14-7, 4-2), which shot 23 percent in the first half and finished with a season low in points.

St. Bonaventure 78, No. 21 Massachusetts 65: At Olean, N.Y., Youssou Ndoye scored 11 of his 12 points in the second half as the Bonnies (13-8, 3-4 Atlantic 10) ended a 24-game losing streak against ranked opponents.

Trest Davis scored 18 points for the Minutemen (17-3, 4-2), who lost for the second time in three games.

No. 22 Memphis 69, UCF 59: At Orlando, Fla., Joe Jackson scored 17 points and Chris Crawford and Michael Dixon added 12 each for the Tigers (16-4, 6-2 American).

Isaiah Sykes led UCF (9-9, 1-6) with 24 points.

Penn State 71, No. 24 Ohio State 70 (OT): At Columbus, Ohio, D.J. Newbill hit a pull-up jumper over Aaron Craft with 2 seconds left in overtime for the Nittany Lions (11-10, 2-6 Big Ten).

Newbill led the Nittany Lions with 25 points. LaQuinton Ross scored 16 points for Ohio State (16-5, 3-5), which has lost five of six after starting 15-0 and rising to No. 3 in the polls.



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Syracuse's C.J. Fair, left, and Wake Forest's Travis McKie chase a loose ball during the second half in Winston-Salem, N.C., on Wednesday night. Fair scored 16 points as the No. 2 Orange improved to 20-0 with a 67-57 victory over the Demon Deacons.

Nos. 1 & 2 survive road tests

Arizona buckles down to escape at Stanford

The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — For nearly 9 minutes, Arizona made defensive stop after stop. In that critical sequence, the top-ranked Wildcats held Stanford scoreless and helped preserve their perfect start to the season.

Nick Johnson kept Arizona's unblemished record going, hitting a go-ahead three-pointer with 51 seconds remaining and two free throws with 5.8 seconds left as Arizona survived for a 60-57 victory Wednesday night for its school-record 21st straight victory.

"We're an outstanding defensive team. It isn't as if we changed any scheme, we just buckled down and had a lot of players playing very hard, and our ability to hold them to what we did is a big reason we won. Our defense won the game tonight," Arizona coach Sean Miller said. "No question we have to execute better on offense and we have to be more confident at the line."

After Johnson hit a jumper in the middle of the key with 2:36 left to make it 55-53, Dwight Powell answered on a baseline drive with 1:21 to go before Johnson delivered once more.

Johnson finished with 16 points, five rebounds and four assists and T.J. McConnell added 11 points, eight rebounds and four assists for Arizona (21-0, 8-0 Pac-12).

Arizona is one of three unbeaten teams left in Division I, joining No. 2 Syracuse and No. 4 Wichita State.

Powell and Josh Huestis each scored 13 points for Stanford (13-7, 4-4), which outshot Arizona 38 percent to 36 percent.



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Arizona's Nick Johnson, bottom, grabs a rebound net to Stanford's Josh Huestis, center, and teammate T.J. McConnell, top, Wednesday night in Stanford, Calif. Johnson lifted the No. 1 Wildcats down the stretch as Arizona beat the Cardinal 60-57 for its school-record 21st consecutive victory.

2nd-ranked Syracuse pulls away from Wake

The Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Only two Syracuse teams have won their first 20 games, and C.J. Fair has been a member of both.

"This current one, he says, is "a hard-fought 20-game winning streak."

Not much came easy during the Orange's latest victory.

Syracuse matched the best start in program history Wednesday night, pulling away to beat Wake Forest 67-57 behind a strong second half from freshman Tyler Ennis.

Ennis scored 16 of his 18 points after halftime and Fair finished with 16 for the Orange (20-0, 7-0 Atlantic Coast Conference). Trevor Cooney scored his eight in the final 1:45.

No. 2 Syracuse remained one of three unbeaten teams in Division I with No. 1 Arizona and No. 4 Wichita State.

The Orange pulled away while sidestepping a possible trap with a visit from No. 17 Duke coming this weekend, and joined the 2011-12 group as the only Orange teams to start 20-0.

In their first visit to Tobacco Road as ACC members, they had to work for it against a Wake Forest team that had been perfect at home and tough on visitors in the top five.

"It was just one of those games you're just trying to struggle through defensively, and we did just a good enough job defensively to be able to get the win," coach Jim Boeheim said.

Travis McKie scored 12 points for the Demon Deacons (14-7, 4-4), and his free throw with 4:10 left pulled them to 54-49.

SUPER BOWL



JACK DEMPSEY/AP

Denver Broncos tight end Julius Thomas, left, wide receiver Demaryius Thomas (88), and wide receiver Wes Welker (83) have given quarterback Peyton Manning, right, an abundance of options. No team in the history of the NFL ever had as many players (5) catch at least 60 passes or reach the end zone 10 or more times until the Broncos.

Take your pick With five strong receiver options, Manning spreads the wealth

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
The Associated Press

Seattle's "Legion of Boom" secondary led by All-Pro Richard Sherman and Earl Thomas may be able to slow down, say Demaryius Thomas, in the Super Bowl. That doesn't mean Peyton Manning will have to tap the brakes on Denver's Lamborghini offense.

Manning doesn't have just one go-to receiver like most quarterbacks.

He has five.
The Seahawks will match up the NFL's top pass defense this season against the best passing offense of all time in the Super Bowl at East Rutherford, N.J.

"That's the matchup everybody is going to be talking about, Peyton Manning vs. the Legion of Boom," Hall of Famer and Fox color analyst Troy Aikman said. "I'm excited to see it. That's why I spoke about how disappointing it would be if conditions keep that part of it from happening the way we'd like to see because of the impact the weather may have on the passing game."

Even if wintry weather curtails his passing prowess, Manning can downshift as easily as he can dial up a deep pass. With the bunch formations and picks and rubs that got under Bill Belichick's skin, the turbo-charged Broncos have morphed into a yard-chewing, clock-eating machine in the playoffs.

With Manning dinking and dunking his way downfield, Denver's three most time-

'It's hard to catch a break with him.'

Richard Sherman

Seahawks CB

defenses have answers for.

"It's hard to catch a break with him, catch a tendency or something that you can jump," Sherman said of Manning, who sports a 40-1 TD-to-interception ratio in the red zone this season, including the playoffs — and that one interception bounced off his receiver's chest, no less.

Of all the records Manning and the Broncos set this season, the one that stands out to Denver wide receivers coach Tyke Tolbert is this: No team in NFL history ever had five players reach the end zone 10 or more times until Demaryius Thomas (14), Knowshon Moreno (13), Julius Thomas (12), Eric Decker (11) and Wes Welker (10) did it this season.

"That tells you about the players we have on our team, the way Peyton spreads the ball out, how anybody can score at any given time," Tolbert said.

No other team has ever had more than three players hit double-digit TDs.

This quintet helped the Broncos break the once-unfathomable 600-point barrier

consuming drives of the season have all come in the last two weeks, 7-minute masterpieces that rendered Philip Rivers and Tom Brady sideline spectators.

He simply has more outlets than

and each of them also caught 60 or more passes. No team had ever had five players do that before, either.

Manning says his unprecedented 55 TD passes and 5,477 yards through the air are only temporary records which will be surpassed by Brady or Drew Brees in no time — or by any number of other quarterbacks if owners get their way and expand the regular season to 18 games. But Tolbert thinks the 5-10 guys have nothing to sweat.

The beauty of the Broncos' offense is in its balance.

Manning targeted his three starting receivers almost identically: Demaryius Thomas (8.7 times a game), Welker (8.54), Decker (8.5). Julius Thomas, whose dozen scores broke Hall of Famer Shannon Sharpe's club record for tight ends, was targeted 6.42 times per game.

"Peyton doesn't discriminate," Decker said.

"He doesn't force passes," Demaryius Thomas said.

"He just takes what the defense gives him," said Julius Thomas, the tight end who caught 65 passes for 788 yards after catching just one pass in his first two seasons.

"He just goes down the line and finds whoever is singled up," offensive coordinator Adam Gase said.

"Or whoever's wide open," suggested backup tight end Jacob Tamme, who was left all alone for a TD in Denver's win over New England last week.

"Yeah, that's the truth, we've got a lot of

weapons on our offense," said fellow fill-in Bubba Caldwell, who caught two TD passes against San Diego last month when Welker was sidelined. "If you shut down one guy, we've got like four or five other guys that we can go to at any other time."

The common thread among Manning's many targets, including Moreno, who had three TD catches to go with his 10 TD runs, is a refreshing unselfishness in an age where prima donnas so often demand passes and attention.

"To be an outstanding team, you have to be selfless, not selfish," Broncos coach John Fox said. "I think that speaks to the character of those guys in that room. They don't get all pouty about things like that."

Manning wouldn't put up with such shenanigans anyway.

"The only thing that makes all of us happy is if we win games, whether that's blocking all day and having zero catches or whatever it is," Welker said.

That's what Decker did before breaking out for eight TDs in December, his blocks on screens springing Demaryius Thomas, who led the league's receivers with 718 yards after the catch.

"Our whole group is like that and Decker knows that at any point in time that day can be your day," Tolbert said. "Like when we went to Kansas City, I mean, who'd have thought he'd have four touchdowns? But any day a guy can go out there, it can be a receiver, it can be a tight end, it can be a running back, any day can be your day."

SUPER BOWL

Five things to know

Seahawks hit practice field, minus RB Lynch

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It was back to business at the Super Bowl.

With the wackiness of media day out of the way, the Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos hit the practice field Wednesday for their first full workouts this week leading up to Sunday's big game.

Seattle running back Marshawn Lynch got his usual Wednesday off, the only Seahawks player not to participate as the team practiced indoors at the New York Giants' team facility in East Rutherford, N.J.

"This is the day we rest Marshawn," coach Pete Carroll said. "Wednesday is always a rest day for him. We've been doing that for years and it's always worked out great."

Wide receiver Doug Baldwin was a full participant after being held out of all three practices last week with a hip injury. Defensive tackle Brandon Mebane was an ankle injury slowed him last week.

The Broncos worked out in pads for nearly two hours after a 30-minute walkthrough session, practicing on the synthetic turf outdoor field at the New York Jets' training facility in Florham Park, N.J.

"It was great," Broncos coach John Fox said after a practice in which the temperature dipped to 21 degrees. "We're pretty much weather-proof. We practice in this stuff all the time."

Here's a quick look at a few of the other Super Bowl story lines from Wednesday:

1 Mum Marshawn: A question about Skittles, his favorite candy, couldn't even get Lynch to be chatty.

The Seahawks' running back abruptly ended his media availability — again — walking away from a throng of reporters while escorted by a member of the New Jersey State Police after about 7



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll watches his team warm up during practice on Wednesday in East Rutherford, N.J., for Super Bowl XLVIII on Sunday against the Denver Broncos.

uncomfortable minutes in which he answered just a few questions. Lynch created a stir at media day Tuesday by talking for only 6½ minutes.

He writhed in his seat and leaned his head back at times Wednesday as a few dozen reporters tried to get Lynch to open up during the players' 45-minute availability at the team hotel.

2 Security issues?: Federal and local authorities have heightened security and studied intelligence about recent attacks on mass transit in Russia, even though there have been no specific threat threats against the Super Bowl.

Trains, buses and cars taking fans from New York and

parts of New Jersey to the stadium and back again "are going to be scanned, they're going to be checked, they're going to be swept," said Col. Rick Fuentes, head of the New Jersey State Police.

This year's Super Bowl has the distinction of relying on mass transit to take up to 30,000 fans to the game, so the deadly bombings in the southern Russian city of Volgograd have raised worries here.

Fuentes added that the suicide attacks on a trolleybus and a train station that killed more than 30 people within weeks of the Winter Olympics also prompted a series of meetings among the planners for Super Bowl security.

3 Road to the Super Bowl: Times Square has transformed from the Crossroads of the World to Super Bowl Boulevard.

The popular tourist spot in midtown Manhattan now includes a toboggan run, the centerpiece of a Super Bowl-themed outdoor street fair. Hundreds of people watched as the shiny silver Vince Lombardi Trophy made its debut in a glass case, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio joined the crowd for the unveiling of giant lighted Roman numerals XLVIII.

4 Pursuing Peyton: This Super Bowl could have featured Peyton Manning as the quarterback of the



Seattle Seahawks (15-3)
vs. Denver Broncos (15-3)
AFN-Sports
Midnight Sunday CET
8 a.m. Monday JKT

Seahawks.

In March 2012, coach Pete Carroll and GM John Schneider waited in a private plane in Denver, wondering if Manning would accept a request to meet with the brain trust of the Seahawks to see if that could be a potential landing spot for the free agent quarterback.

Manning decided to go to Denver and the Seahawks ended up drafting Russell Wilson.

5 Weather watch: It appears MetLife Stadium won't be covered in snow for the Super Bowl.

It'll still be plenty cold on Sunday, but the bone-chilling temperatures many were concerned about might not be too much of a worry, either.

According to the National Weather Service, Sunday's high temperature is expected to be 38 degrees. With the opening kickoff scheduled for about 6:30 p.m. EST, the mercury could drop into the 20s by the time the game ends.

"I was expecting unbearable cold," Broncos safety Duke Ihenachio said. "It'll be cold, but it's nothing we haven't seen in Denver."

Coordinators: Broncos, Seahawks' coaches are focused on Super Bowl

FROM BACK PAGE

"not just about receiving, but football in general. I came from the triple option and he taught me so much."

Del Rio, who replaced John Fox and went 3-1 this season while Fox was recovering from heart surgery, was interviewed in Denver by Southern Cal just before Fox was stricken. But the Trojans eventually hired Steve Sarkisian away from the University of Washington.

Unlike Gase, Quinn and Bevell, Del Rio played in the NFL — he was a top-level linebacker for more than a decade — went 69-73 in just under nine seasons as the Jaguars' head man. Fox hired

"There certainly are opportunities every year and at some point it will match up with what somebody's looking for and what I offer."

Jack Del Rio

Denver Broncos defensive coordinator

him in 2012 to replace Dennis Allen, who had left to coach the Raiders.

Del Rio hasn't exactly been seeking out another head coaching gig, but he won't shy away if an offer comes.

"There certainly are opportu-

nities each and every year and at some point it will match up with what somebody's looking for and what I offer," he said. "In the meantime, I'm going to enjoy the heck out of my opportunity here to fight and find a way to win a world championship."



JOHN SLEEZER, KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Denver Broncos defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio, right, interviewed for the head coaching job at the University of Southern California last summer, Del Rio, who stepped in to coach the Broncos when John Fox was out because of heart surgery, was previously the head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

SPORTS

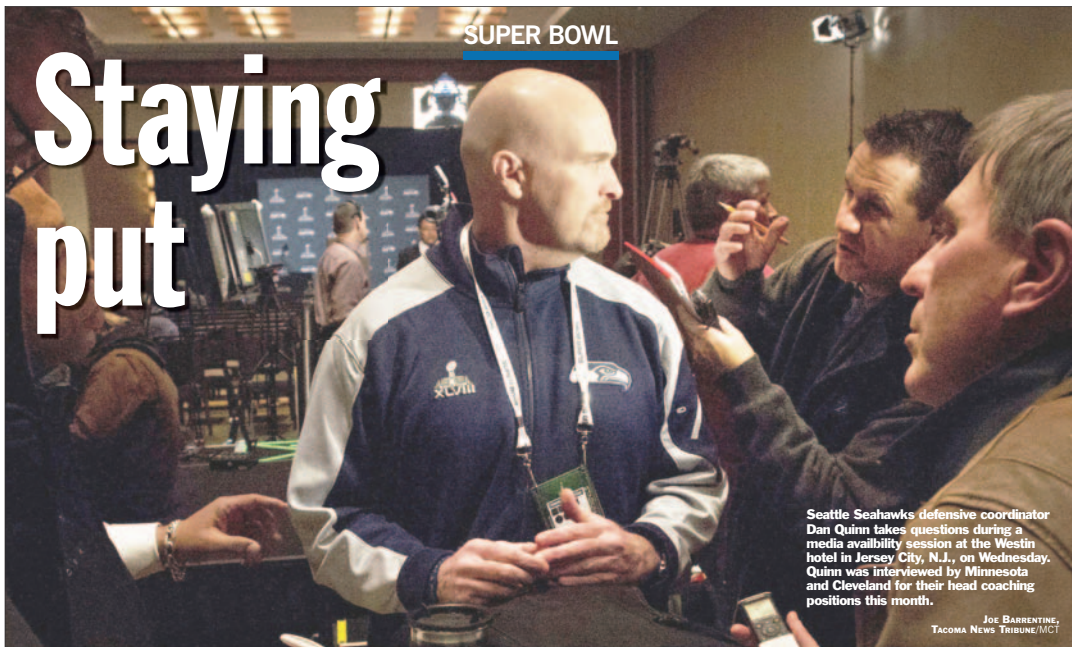


Golden boy

Snowboarder Shaun White looking for two gold medals in Sochi | **Page 26**

SUPER BOWL

Staying put



Seattle Seahawks defensive coordinator Dan Quinn takes questions during a media availability session at the Westin hotel in Jersey City, N.J., on Wednesday. Quinn was interviewed by Minnesota and Cleveland for their head coaching positions this month.

JOE BARRETT/NET
TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE/MCT

Super Bowl runs ensure Broncos, Seahawks coordinators won't jump ship

BY BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

SUPER BOWL coordinators would seem ripe for the head coaching market. Yet the four in Sunday's game aren't going anywhere.

At least not to other NFL teams as the field boss, because all openings have been filled.

That's too bad, say members of the Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks.

It's also good.

"I definitely feel like he will make a great head coach," Seahawks middle linebacker Bobby Wagner said Wednesday of defensive coordinator Dan Quinn. "He's very positive, knows how to lead and teach, and players feed off that."

"But I'm also glad he's going to be here."

Denver Broncos offensive coordinator Adam Gase turned down the chance to interview for head coaching jobs in Minnesota and Cleveland.

CURTIS COMPTON,
ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/MCT

Inside:

- Broncos spread the wealth with five receiving options for Peyton Manning, Page 30
- Seahawks practice, minus Marshawn Lynch, Page 31



As will offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell. Quinn was interviewed by Minnesota and Cleveland this month, while Bevell was in the mix for the top job with the Vikings and Redskins.

Seahawks coach Pete Carroll has built a coaching staff marked by its enthusiasm, aggressiveness and willingness to think outside the box. As Bevell says, Seattle is a "fun place" to be coaching.

Seahawks receiver Doug Baldwin looks forward to future work with Bevell.

"He really knows how to communicate," Baldwin said. "He's approachable and he listens to players. Plus, he has a great offen-

sive mind.

"He doesn't just put in play, he explains them and then he explains the different concepts for running a specific play at a specific time. That helps you learn it like the back of your hand."

The praise is equally effusive for Adam Gase and Jack Del Rio in Denver.

Gase moved up to offensive coordinator when Mike McCoy left to become San Diego's head coach after last season. At 35, he is two years younger than his quarterback, Peyton Manning.

Gase opted off the coaching carousel when it began to spin in early January, although Broncos boss John Elway gave Minnesota and Cleveland permission to speak with Gase.

"Most coaches would say 'Hey, that's my final goal,'" Gase said. "But I can't keep looking in the rearview mirror and saying, 'Hey, I turned this down and I've never gotten another opportunity.' I just felt like it was the right thing for me at that time."

His players stress they believe Gase will become a head coach, but right now they don't want him going anywhere.

"When I first got to Denver, Adam Gase was my wide receiver coach," Demaryius Thomas said. "I learned so much from him,

SEE COORDINATORS ON PAGE 31



Thunder rallies from deep hole to beat Heat | **NBA, Pages 27-28**

Arizona, Syracuse survive road tests | **College basketball, Page 29**

Scrivens makes record 59 saves as Oilers shut out Sharks | **NHL, Page 27**